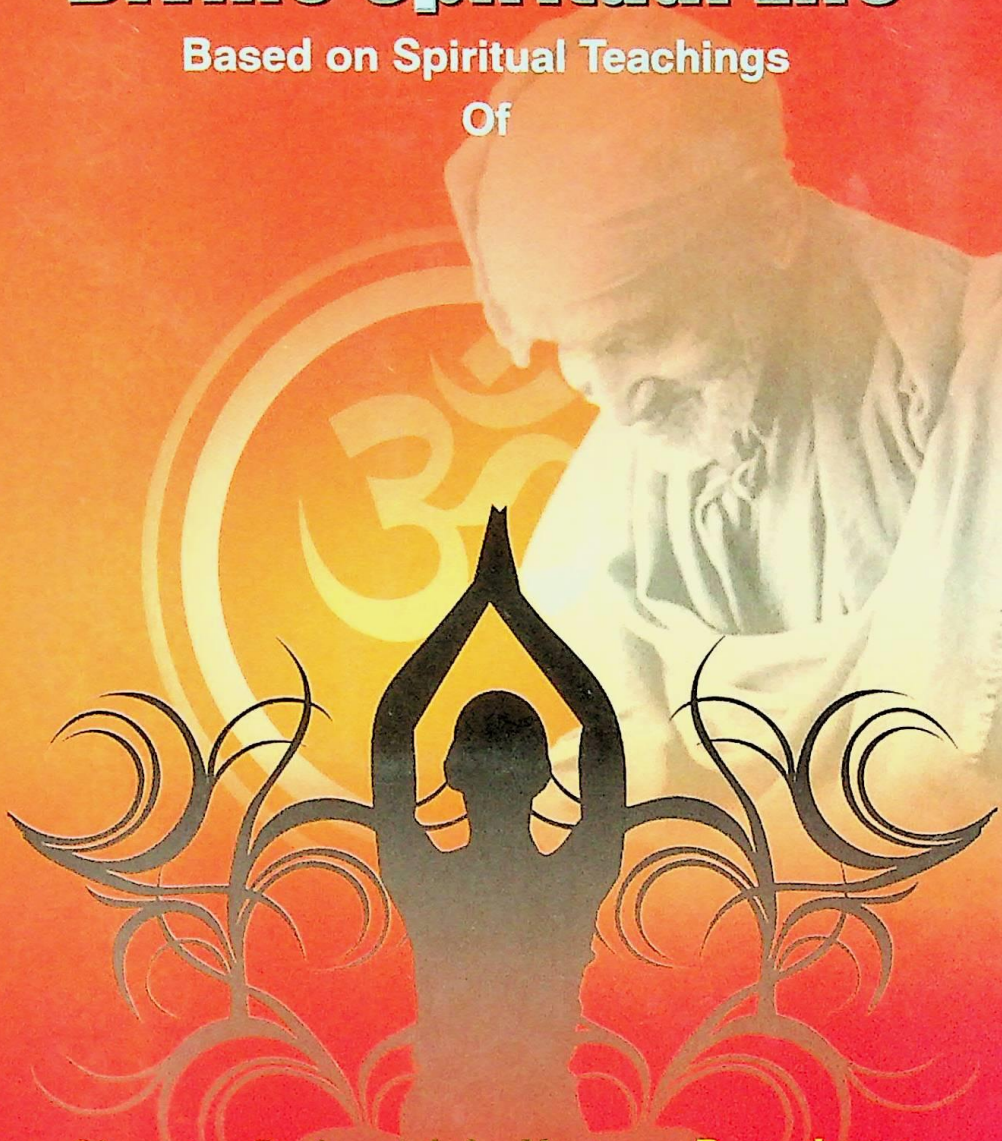
Daily Meditation on the Divine Spiritual Life

Based on Spiritual Teachings

Of



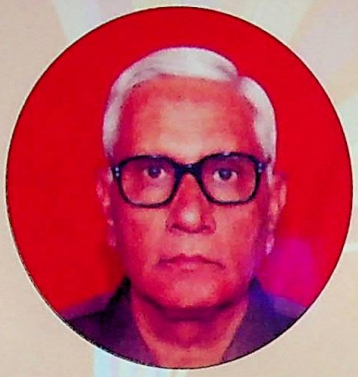
Shrotriya Brahmnishtha Veetraga Paramhansa

SWAMI DAYANAND GIRI JI MAHARAJ

Compiled by:

Dr. B.N. Mathur

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Dr. B.N. Mathur

Born on May 12, 1937, M.Sc. (1958), P.G. Nematol (The Netherlands-1965-66), Ph.D. (1968). 39 years of research, teaching and extensive experience, both in Agricultural Deptt. and Rajasthan Agricultural University. Retired as Professor and Incharge Nematology Deptt. Campus Durgapura Jaipur. Guided 3 students for their doctoral degrees and examined over 20 thesis (M.Phil, Ph.D. degrees). Published about 100 papers in reputed journals. Membership of most of the Nematological societies in the country and abroad. Held several positions in various International and National committees. Also served as a member on the Editorial Board of various national and international journals for a number of years. As an expert and examining candidates in RPSC and UPSC and various universities in written and oral tests. Also served as a member of Board of Agricultural Studies to revise syllabus in universities.

Visited the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Luxermberg, France, Monaco, U.K. (1965-66), USA and Canada (1984) and Syria (1993). Presently busy in reading spiritual journals, books transcending religion. Present Address: F 401, The Residency Ardee City, Sector 52, Gurugram. (Haryana)

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DAILY MEDITATION ON THE DIVINE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Based on the Spiritual Teachings of

Brahmnishtha Veetraga Paramhansa

SWAMI DAYANAND GIRIJI MAHARAJ



Compiled by :

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Gurugram (Haryana)

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Tattamangalam (Kerala)

Vitthalbhai I. Patel
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Published by :

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Swami Dayanand 'Giri' Ji Maharaj

(19 March, 1919 - 23 November, 2004)

त्वदीयं वस्तु गोविन्द तुभ्यमेव समर्पये

O Lord! we dedicate to you, with utmost reverence and humility, what is actually yours.

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Publisher's Note

"Meditation is the bridge that connects the lower mind with the higher mind. Through that the aspirant crosses over from the din and distractions of the sense-bound world to the world of stillness and silence, from the world of darkness to the world of eternal light. All preliminary spiritual discipline fructifies in meditative awareness."

I feel immense pleasure to present to our learned devotees the book **Daily Meditation on the Divine Spiritual Life based on the Spiritual Teachings of Revered Swami Dayanand Giriji Maharaj.**

This book is the result of a unique experience felt by Dr. B.N. Mathur, then a resident of Pune-13 (Maharashtra).Dr. Mathur happened to read some excellent reviews of some of Swamiji's books published in different leading spiritual periodicals of India like *The Vedanta Kesari*, *Prabuddha Bharati*,. *'Dilip'* and *East & West* Series. This aroused in him a desire to study these books and so he requested me to send the books reviewed and I sent him a complete set of spiritual books of Swamiji in Hindi and English.

It is astonishing that Dr. Mathur studied thousands of pages of nearly all of Swamiji's books within six months or so. Dr. Mathur was greatly impressed by Swamiji's teachings culled from Sruti, Smriti, Puranas, Vedas, Bhagavad Geeta and other scriptures and presented in a very simple and clear language of common people. He was also impressed by Swamiji's practical approach to guide the mind of seekers on the Right Path through Right Knowledge and in a scientific, logical manner. Swamiji's life has left a deep imprint on his mind.

While Dr. Mathur was about to complete study of these books, he felt inspired by Swamiji to compile a book of Daily Meditation for seekers who had genuine spiritual inclination but

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were either hard-pressed for time or were even afraid to study the large treasure trove of Swamiji's writings, spread over in several books, each of a few hundred pages, to assimilate the knowledge contained therein. Dr. Mathur immediately suggested me to work on the project of a Daily Meditation book.I immediately endorsed and appreciated the idea and requested Dr. Mathur to take up the noble task with Swamiji's blessings as I expressed my inability to do so. Dr. Mathur agreed to take up the project considering it as will of Revered Swamiji.

The completion of this project is no less than a miracle. In the words of Dr. Mathur, "Let me disclose/share a miracle experienced by me.Throughout the period this work continued, I suffered from mild to severe infection and my body experienced constant discomfiture. However Swamiji was always with me holding an umbrella and the work continued without break and I did not experience any feeling necessitating an interruption or closing the assignment for the day."

This book contains 157 verses only of the divine spiritual life written in English by Swamiji himself. The detailed interpretation of these verses, written in English, by Revered Swamiji himself, is contained in the book **Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life (With Explanation).** Those who are interested in studying the detailed interpretation may send their request for the same on the address mentioned in the book.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. B.N.Mathur for the completion of the Daily Meditation on the Divine Spiritual Life within a short period, with utmost care and unmatched commitment and dedication. The quality of compilation of the book maintaining the spirit of Swamiji's sayings in letter and spirit is an ample proof how deep and strenuous perusal he had made of the all his books both in Hindi and English.

In the end, I bow my head in gratitude before Revered Swamiji Maharaj whose invisible spirit came to my help and guidance whenever there came any problem in my way. I offer

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my humblest pranams at the lotus feet of Swamiji Maharaj whose blessings, inspiration and guidance has made this work possible.

I am highly grateful to Dr. Uma Sangameswaran, Head (Retd.) Post Graduate Deptt. of English and Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Mercy College Palakkad (Kerala) and Sh. Vitthalbhai I. Patel, Retd. High School teacher of English and Hindi who has taken keen interest in editing the complete text written by Dr. B.N. Mathur on my humble request. Both learned devotees have incorporated certain grammatical or typographical corrections in this work with utmost care and unmatched commitment and dedication. Earnest spiritual readers will ever remain indebted to both of them for doing this noble work.

My thanks are also due to Prof. A.S. Mahajan, Head of Post Graduate Deptt.of English (Retd.), G.M.N. College, Ambala Cantt, who always came forward to put his services at the lotus feet of Revered Swamiji Maharaj during publication of Revered Swamiji's books. I am also thankful to Sh. C.L. Puri, journalist, and Sh. Jai Parkash Mathur of Vill. Majri (Karala) Delhi-81 who helped me in this regard whenever I needed their services .

Several devotees whose names have been given at the end of this book extended their moral and material (financial) support and assistance for the publication of this book for which the spiritual world will ever remain grateful to each and every one of them.

It is earnestly prayed at the lotus feet of Almighty God that the study of this Daily Meditaiton Book may kindle the spiritual urge of the readers to attain the ultimate goal of life - The ultimate truth!

G.C. Garg
Registrar (Retd.)
Technical Education
Haryana, Chandigarh

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My Humble Thanksgiving

I am very fortunate to have come in contact with His Holiness Swami Dayananda Giriji Maharaj's spiritual literature through Sh. Gian Chand Garg Mahodaya, the pious, humble staunch and every inch an ardent and true follower of Revered Swamiji. It so happened that there was one good news in the *Prabuddha Bharata* September 2011 issue : 'Books for free Distribution'. Soon finding out Sh.G.C. Garg's phone number from Gandhinagar, I contacted him on phone and requested him to send me Swamiji's two books mentioned in the above issue. On the same day he sent me seven books — four in English and three in Hindi by speed post. On receiving the books I was greatly pleased with and amazed at his prompt service and his longing to quench my thirst for spiritual knowledge. Hon. Dr. B.N. Mathur Saheb is quite right when he commends him saying that he is a man of tall stature and exemplary living. I am, indeed, highly indebted to him for ever for this noble act of his.

Then one day, he phoned me and told me so many worth knowing facts about Rev. Swamiji and his spiritual literature. He also told me about his plan of bringing out one book under the title Daily Meditation to be compiled by Hon. Dr. B.N. Mathur Saheb and very humbly asked me if I would be able and willing to take up the task of editing and proof-reading of the book.

Inspired by his humane nature and with Swamiji's blessings I, without any hesitation, readily agreed to do this difficult, challenging, time-bound and painstaking job though this was my first experience of this kind. He soon sent me the matter and remained in touch with me for about two months, encouraging me, giving me the necessary guidance and hints and offering prayers for me.

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Let me humbly confess that the assigned task was really very difficult for me. But for God's boundless grace, Swamiji's blessings and Sh.Garg Saheb's heartfelt encouragement, inspiration and his prayers to God and Swamiji for me, I would not have been successful in doing my work to my soul's satisfaction. For this I most humbly, with folded hands and a bowed head, offer my respectful salutations and prostrations and express my gratitude to Almighty God, Rev. Swamiji, my spiritual master Swami Sivanandji Maharaj, the Founder of the Divine Life Society, Shri Garg Saheb and my learned, honourable and worshipful English teacher Shri Keshavlal A. Thakkar Saheb. The credit of whatever I could do well goes to the Almighty and these four great personalities.

Inspite of my painstaking and sincere efforts and great care, there still reamins the scope for improvement in this work. I hold myself responsible for any lapses and shortcomings left out in the work.

I, personally and on behalf of all the seekers, respectfully tender my hearty thanks to Rev.Dr. B.N. Mathur Saheb, who inspite of his advanced age, out of his mercy and his great love and respect for Rev. Swamiji, took great pains to compile and place in our hands the book Daily Meditation, which is really in a nutshell the pot of nectar, the pot of milked essence of Swamiji's vast ocean of spiritual knowledge.

Before I conclude, I would like to say something about the book and the effect that it has had on me. As regards the title of the book, I would say that it is quite apt, significant and pregnant with meaning. Meditation means to concentrate one's mind upon one thought, one topic, one object without any interruption. Meditation proves beneficial and fruitful if practised daily with regularity. Like meditation, here the seeker has to daily study mindfully one or two pages fixed for the day, reflect upon one

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particular central thought of the day and try to practise and assimilate the same in his day to day life to the best of his capacity. If sincerely, persistently and rigorously practised and followed the path shown by Swamiji, the seeker would, on the one hand, start breaking the worldly fetters one by one and, on the other hand, start manifesting the latent divinity in him and ultimately this would lead him to self-realisation, the supreme goal of life.

Rev. Swamiji has, like Mahatama Gandhi, lived what he has preached. He has given unique and detailed explanations of so many spiritual terms like Prakriti, Uttarayan Marg and Dakshinayana Marg and the like.

The chapter 'Mindful Respiration' is a very useful and invaluable jewel of and a necessary addition to this book. In this chapter, Swamiji, realizing the special utility of mindful respiration for the spiritual seekers, has shown its correct method and its advantages in great detail.

The potent teachings of this book have had a tremendous effect on me. While going through the pages during the course of editing and proof-reading, I felt charged with lofty and exhilarating feelings. I also felt a unique kind of peace, serenity and inner strength in me.

It is earnestly hoped that the book Daily Meditation would prove to be an unfailing and essential guide for the earnest spiritual seekers.

With respectful Pranams at the Lotus Feet of worshipful Swamiji.

Vitthalbhai I. Patel
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Editor's Note

Let me, at the outset, express my heartfelt gratitude to Sri. G.C. Garg for entrusting me the work of editing the book **Daily Meditations on the Divine Spiritual Life**, a compilation from the works of **Swami Dayanand Giriji Maharaj** by Dr. B.N. Mathur. This is the third book of Swamiji that I have been fortunate to work on. I consider all these assignments as tokens of Swamiji's abundant blessings *(ashirwad)*.

The present book is a compilation of passages and verses culled (selected) from the entire works of Reverend Swamiji, including his discourses, verses and explanatory notes. Dr. B.N. Mathur has done a highly commendable task in patiently perusing (making a deep study of) Swamiji's works and selecting and arranging the passages on a daily basis for the entire year. He follows a certain pattern comprising prose passages during the weekdays followed by the *Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life* on certain weekends. By the end of a year the reader will get a comprehensive idea of Swamiji's main teachings and technique of meditation. Dr. Mathur deserves high praise for his noble act of devotion and patient study. The **Compiler's Note** will give the readers a detailed idea of the genesis (origin) and format of the book.

The backbone of this book, like all the other publications of Swamiji, is **Sri. G.C. Garg**. His unflinching faith in Swamiji is total. He is full of enthusiasm and energy for spreading the teachings of Swamiji to devotees all over the world. I know him chiefly through the various correspondences and phone calls in which we discuss how to carry out the tasks

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of translating or editing Swamiji's works. I place on record my sincere appreciation for the dedication, perseverance and untiring efforts that Sri. Garg puts in to get Swamiji's works published in time.

Regarding the editing of the present book, I have not altered the passages selected by Dr. Mathur. The contents and order of the passages are exactly as he has presented them. All that I have done is to make modifications and corrections in relevant places so as to make the language as idiomatic and clear as possible and to render the presentation beautiful. Incidentally, editing this book has been comparatively easy since I had already edited on earlier occasions many of Swamiji's books from which all the passages and verses have been taken. The title of the book has been chosen as ***Daily Meditation on the Divine Spiritual Life*** to match with Swamiji's masterpiece *Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life*. I firmly believe that it is as per Reverened Swamiji's will and blessings.

Thus the edited work is true to Swamiji in letter and spirit, as Sri. Garg always insists. The readers can get the true flavour of Swamiji's thoughts and ideas expressed in his characteristic style.

Swamiji's article entitled Mindful Respiration *(Pranapan Samriti)* has been included. This is an extremely enlightened piece of writing explaining the preparation to be done before sitting for proper meditation. Readers who are serious about meditation are advised to study this article and master the fundamentals. Another article that has been included is entitled Why Meditate. It contains a general introduction to Swamiji's

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method of meditation. With the help of these articles it is expected that readers would not have any difficulty in understanding the daily passages and verses included in this book. In addition to these, one titled page has been devoted to each month dwelling on the pre-requisites and aspects of Swamiji's method of meditation. Readers may benefit by following these instructions earnestly. Let us pray for the abundant blessings *(ashirwaad)* of Reverend Swamiji in our daily meditation.

***

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Why Meditate ...

Dr. Uma Sangameswaran

Everyone desires everlasting health, happiness, prosperity and peace. When something goes wrong, a person is easily upset. He blames his fate or circumstances or bad times or even other people. He goes to any extent to avoid pain and suffering, be it poverty or ill health or loss of prestige and property. Visits to the astrologer followed by going to temples to do all kinds of ritualistic worship for warding off bad times *(parihara)*, using talismans, going on pilgrimages, giving away alms and feeding the poor are too common. Yet happiness seems to elude man. In spite of enjoying good health, amassing wealth, building up a successful career or business, acquiring a high reputation and position in society etc, he is not fully happy. He craves for more. He is afraid of loss — of life, loved ones, property, prestige and what not. In short, in spite of accomplishing every imaginable desire, man experiences a terrible void, a sense of emptiness or futility. This void is the hunger of the soul. All that man acquires materially is for the satisfaction of the body and the mind. The real food for the soul lies within each one of us in the form of everlasting bliss *(ananda)*. It can be obtained through devotion *(bhakti)*, selfless action *(nishkama karma)* and particularly by meditation *(dhyana)*.

In his search for real happiness a person resembles the musk deer *(kasturi mriga)* which seeks the source of the fragrance of musk in the grass, little realizing that the musk lies inside its own body ! True joy is the nature of the soul. Happiness lies deep inside each one of us. All that is needed is to go inward and connect ourselves with our inner self whose nature is essence-consciousness-bliss *(sachidananda)*. Meditation is the key to tap this inner source of eternal bliss. Swamiji has elaborated on this topic in several parts of his voluminous writings. Having enjoyed the joy of the soul and having become established in a blissful state, Swamiji wishes to impart it to all of us. Hence his repeated

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exhortations *(advice)* in all his discourses and verses. He speaks of the paths of devotion *(bhaktiyoga)* and selfless action *(karmayoga)* as preliminaries to the path of meditation *(dhyanayoga)*. Swamiji was a great *jnanayogi* and *vedantin* like Adi Sankaracharya and Bhagwan Ramana Maharishi who tried to fathom the secrets of existence using his intellect *(buddhi)* and discrimination *(viveka)*. His essay on Mindful Respiration *(Pranapan Samriti)* is a valuable contribution to the literature on meditation.

The benefits of meditation are many. Regular meditation reduces physical and mental strain and tension, improves health and fitness, enhances sound sleep, is conducive to a positive and optimistic attitude to life, removes mental fetters and negativities, improves relationships and gives an overall sense of wellbeing and happiness. Swamiji has dwelt on all these aspects in his writings and discourses. But the highest goal of meditation is God realization and that is the focus of all the utterances of Swamiji. The reverend saint offers a very simple and practical method of meditation which can be easily followed even by lay (common) people. Leading a life based on noble principles, one should eliminate one's negative qualities, one by one. Following a moderate diet one should regulate his breathing using *pranapan samriti*. One should practise sitting in solitude as well as introspection. Such a person will be able to meditate easily and reap its rewards in bountiful measure.

There is nothing rigid or difficult about Swamiji's method of meditation. It is all about training the mind to stop wandering in the outside world and turning one's attention inwards. Swamiji's meditation has its roots in the *advaita-vedanta* philosophy of Adi Sankaracharya which is reflected in the teachings of Jiddu Krishnamurti and Sri Aurobindo, as well as the Buddhist forms of meditation such as *Zen* and *Vipassana* to a great extent. Incidentally, the Buddhists have developed *dhyana or zazen* with great precision like Swamiji. His technique of mindful respiration

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(Pranapan Samriti) bears resemblance to *Anapanasati* practised in Buddhist meditation. Like the Buddha, Swamiji reiterates that craving (strong desire) is the root of all sorrows; the fetters that he speaks of are like the hindrances mentioned in *samatha* meditation. The spiritual virtues like praiseworthy attitude towards others *(mudita)*, compassion *(karuna)*, loving kindness *(maitri called metta in Buddhism)*, affecting ignorance towards the sins of others *(upeksha)* etc., that Swamiji repeatedly asks us to develop are equivalent to the *Brahmavihara* meditations in Buddhism. According to Swamiji, deep meditation helps us to develop insight and equanimity; this is the central principle of *vipassana* and *samatha* meditation too. Swamiji's *pranapan samriti*, introspection, and awareness are practices followed by every school of meditation. The point that is being established is that Swamiji's method of meditation is universally practical and it is based on his own experience.

Swamiji does not preach only formal sittings for meditation at regular times as several schools of meditation do. On the contrary, he goes beyond formal meditation and advises us to make meditation itself a way of life. He emphasizes the following points as requisites for a meditative life:

1. Healthy and simple living
2. Mindful Respiration
3. Regular practice of solitude
4. Study of good books and cultivation of noble thoughts
5. Contemplation and Introspection
6. Conscious renunciation of negative attitudes and vices
7. Conscious substitution of positive attitudes and virtues
8. Choiceless awareness

If we adopt such a life style we are sure to benefit by Swamiji's teachings and technique of meditation. Swamiji has shown the way; it is for us to follow his principles and make our lives blessed, happy and peaceful.

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Humble Supplication

At the outset, I congratulate the seeker of truth for picking up this book of "Daily Meditation", as it has everything one seeks for Self-realisation, the ultimate goal of human existence and as it is based on the teachings of His Holiness Paramhans Veetraag Swami Dayanand 'Giri' Ji Maharaj in his own words. I also invite him to join me in bowing his head before Swamiji to seek his Grace in his mission. Let me admit that I am a humble house holder *(grihastha)* with no pretentiousness either to scholarship or to any spiritual attainment, and that Swamiji provided the required air under my wings, so he is the author of this presentation.

Though I never saw nor met Swamiji in person, which I consider my misfortune, I always felt his presence around me in recent years. Infact, he pulled me in his Holy Orbit through G.C. Garg Sahib, who on being requested by me also sent me a set of books written by Swamiji along with copies of books in English translations published by that time. Later on, Garg Sahib assigned me the proof-reading of the Vol.-II A and Vol.-II B translated by eminent, pious scholars advanced in spiritual field. This exercise necessitated reading of every line of every passage of his discourses. I was greatly impressed by Swamiji's divine ability of putting the wisdom spread over the vast Holy Hindu Scriptures; the Puranas; the Vedas, the Shrutis, the Smirtis, the Upnishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Valmiki Ramayana (all in Sanskrit) in simple Hindi or Local dialect for the benefit of his devotees, seekers and visitors drawn from all strata and classes with varying levels of education and knowledge. Moreover, Swamiji was a prolific writer. Each of his works in the form of discourses, verses, dictionary etc., covers over a few hundreds of pages.

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While this proof-reading work was going on, Swamiji inspired me to compile a book of Daily Meditation for the seekers placed in diverse sets of circumstances. The first group of seekers who have attained financial security because of better education, but also have religious leanings, are short of time to join 'Satsang' or visit a temple or hear the discourses from a guru or realized saint. Nevertheless, they are always on the lookout of a 'route-map' or a 'guide book' to Self-realisation, and this presentation may meet their requirement. The second group of seekers who can possibly devote 45m – 1 hr in reading and in subsequent reflection etc. are afraid of wading through the vast sea of Swamiji's scriptures though they are equally keen to reach the divine destination. These seekers will also find this book very useful as after reading these small nuggets of wisdom, in every likelihood they will be tempted to read the full text of all Swamiji's books. So not surprisingly, this will fulfil the aspiration of both these groups. I conveyed my feelings to Garg Sahib to undertake this task in view of his tall stature, his long association with Swamiji and his examplery living according to Swamiji's philosophy. Garg Sahib appreciated the idea, and probably inspired by Swamiji asked me to undertake the assignment seeking Swamiji's blessings. He also promised me to review it critically after completion to bring it in a useful form. I do not have sufficient words to thank Garg Sahib for his unfailing support and encouragement all the while.

I am also grateful to the great and learned scholars like Late Dr. A.C. Moudgal, Late Prof. A.S. Mahajan, Dr. Bankey Lal Sharma, Smt. Girija Shashtry and Dr. Uma Sangameshwaran for their excellent translated versions of Swamiji's Hindi books, which provided the source material in Swamij's words for their compilation. Further, I am to express my heartfelt gratitude to Shri Vithalbhai I. Patel, to Dr. Uma Sangameshwaran and to Late Prof.

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A.S. Mahajan for their painstaking editing of my script, without which I would not have been able to render this humble '*sewa*' at His Holy feet. Last but not the least I am indebted to the members of my family, my son Ajay, my daughter-in-law Dr. Preeta and my grandson Arpit for extending their tender care to me all the while.

The layout though simple needs some elaboration. The first six days are set for thoughts from discourses, while the weekend or long weekend (fortnightly) is kept loose and extendable for verses and for spiritual dictionary to provide a change to the reader. Each day starts with 1–2 interlinked thoughts in about 1–3 short passages, readable in 8–12 minutes, at the seeker's residence before leaving for his work, or while commuting to the office by cab, bus or train or during his recess hour in the day. Those seekers who belong to the second category, can take up these nuggets of wisdom as Swamiji's short messages, reflect and meditate upon them to assimilate their meanings. These thoughts for each day are arranged like the beads in a rosary, apart from each other and at the same time also strung together through a common thread to maintain continuity.

The truth of Swamiji's sayings can only be understood if the reader who is also a seeker puts his heart to it. While reading he should use his scholarship and intellect to reflect upon the contents and strive to assimilate them to transform his life. With this humble supplication I place this publication in the reader's hands seeking Swamiji's blessings to brighten his life.

B.N. Mathur

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Guru Brahma **
**** Guru Vishnu ****
**** Guru devo Maheshwara ****
**** Guru sakshat para Brahma ****
**** Tasmai shri guruve nama :**



Dedicated to :

Paramhansa Veetraga Revered Swami Dayanand Giri Ji Maharaj —the satguru who dwells in our hearts.

— Devotees

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JANUARY

Body: The Temple of the Living God

Anyone who wishes to meditate seriously and earnestly should give the utmost importance to his health. He must keep his body fit and intact so that he can sit in a meditative posture for a long period of time without physical strain or pain. The human body is a wonderful gift bestowed on us by the Almighty. In fact, it is the temple of the living God. It is only the human being who has all the faculties for God realization. Meditation is an effective means to achieve it. But we often forget our ultimate goal and abuse and misuse our body. Over-eating, overindulgence in sensuous pleasures, overactivity, loss of adequate sleep, lack of exercise, etc., all tend to weaken and exhaust the body and we soon lose our strength and vitality. They induce sloth and lethargy when we sit for meditation. We must avoid all these bad habits consciously. *Sattwik* (pure) food, fresh bath and oil massage, adequate exercise and sound sleep, all on a moderate scale, enable the body to remain healthy and fit for deep contemplation, concentration and meditation. The whole idea is that while we should not unnecessarily pamper our body, we should take every care to keep it healthy, devoid of any physical strain so that our meditative sittings become a pleasure rather than a pain.

Editor

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Day 1



JANUARY

A person has to lead life in such a manner as enables him to look within his inner self (mind) and to know his inner spiritual life. To achieve this objective, the person has to concentrate and consolidate his mind, which has got scattered, disintegrated and dissipated during the pursuits of external, worldly gains. In other words, his mind must get unified, concentrated and consolidated within itself, after withdrawing and segregating itself from external worldly activities.

During sound sleep, the Lord of Consciousness *(gyandev)*, freely touches, fondles and nourishes each and every cell of the body, generating a feeling of freshness and rejuvenation. When all the mental energy, which got scattered in the external worldly activities, gets separated from the external world during sleep and flows back into the mind, one experiences a sublime bliss. To experience a similar bliss during the waking state, one should fully withdraw one's mind from the external world and consolidate and unify it with one's soul or spirit. As a result one will continue to experience the ever-lasting and ever-redeeming bliss of one's inner spirit or soul, which will never be destroyed in this life and even in the next birth. This complete severance of worldly ties is called salvation *(mukti)*.

Guided by religious faith, or after hearing sermons, or after the study of holy scriptures, one should examine one's life, its aims or ends and try to know wherein lies one's well being. Thus one should introspect and learn from one's spiritual life following its principles. In order to adopt this spiritual life, one should control one's senses of seeing, hearing, smell, touch and taste. One should develop sympathy for others' sufferings, and also recognise their merits and appreciate them. All these practices will lead one to self-control.

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DAY 2

The life one gets at birth is merely a physical existence, which survives only with the help of the outside world. From the moment a child is born in this world, his life is dependent on the external world, as his five cognitive senses — eyes, ears, nose, tongue (taste) and skin (touch) respond only to stimuli from the external world and he is able to see, hear and recognise everything. The persons and products, which give him comfort are accepted and those which give him discomfort are rejected. This process is termed as *raga-dwesha* or attachment-aversion, and is produced by his interactions within the external world, which starts early in life.

The *Upnishadas* mention that when *Lord Brahma*, the creator in the cosmic trinity, created this universe, he made all the senses extrovert. This fact, in a way, sets limits to the senses, which compels the individual to look outwards. That is why everyone knows the persons and products existing in the outer world and is ignorant about his inner self. Thus, the bliss of the soul abiding within the person, remains unknown to him due to the wraps of ignorance *(avidya)*. This happens because the senses respond to the stimuli from the external world. Consequently, one suffers from disease, afflictions and other maladies. The fetters of ignorance are so strong that he is afraid of breaking them.

Taking for granted that the external world is the main source of his comfort and well being. He is so much lost in the external world that he is willing to sacrifice his life-breath to possess these insignificant comforts. The living being is so badly trapped in this ignorance (Avidya) that he even cannot disengage himself from it, and continues to obey its dictates.

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DAY 3

A child lives in the world of his own beliefs. He eats what he gets. After eating food, he does not bother as to what is happening in this world. He plays and does not bother much about the world. He is happy because so far, he is not aware of any type of doubt or fear. The child is content because, so far, he has not developed the love of eating delicious food of his own choice. If he has not developed affection, then take it for granted that he has not developed aversion too. Occupied with his playful, free existence, the child is sometimes keenly listening to sounds in his vicinity. He is laughing to see the rippling water, as also the cold breeze, oblivious of the worries of the world. The power of consciousness fancifully indulges in itself in that child. That is why the child experiences some bliss of that power of consciousness, which is experienced in full by the spiritually liberated soul. In the child that power is not scattered in the outside world. Similarly one enjoys some bliss during sound sleep because one's senses withdraw themselves from the external world and one remains dormant at that time with one's life forces at rest.

If a similar mental state is achieved in meditation and in fully conscious condition, a person experiences bliss in the company of his own soul. This state is termed as *moksha* or spiritual liberation. To achieve the state of spiritual liberation, one should meditate a little and examine one's thoughts reviewing one's actions carried out during the day. One should also scrutinise the role of one's habits in affecting one's actions, and resolve not to repeat the bad ones in future.

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DAY 4

Merely by resolving in mind, one cannot give up his habitual way of life. One has to be always mindful and make great efforts to perform good actions so that one may, whenever necessary, protect oneself from indulging in bad actions. The righteous way of life adopted with full faith directs one to examine one's life and know which direction one's life is headed to. With such introspection one can develop that knowledge which discerns the inner truths, annihilating ignorance which deprives one from the bliss of one's soul. This will help an individual to observe how he actually speaks to others and how he should speak. Thus, one should start understanding one's 'self' and learn about good conduct and its practice. Further one should start realising one's duties and accordingly mould oneself to lead a pious life in this world, to reach the goal of highest spiritual attainment or spiritual blessedness (*paramdham*).

With the help of meditation and knowledge one would also realise that the materialistic modern way of life leads one nowhere, and deprives one of spiritual gains. Ultimately, the worldly material comforts are not going to last, and only suffering and diseases one shall get. The inner spirit has its own unique method to cure all the maladies and sufferings produced by the material, worldly life, whether these are related to the physical, mental or spiritual spheres. The suffering caused by the outward flow of the Life-Force will change into bliss if the life-force is concentrated in oneself, instead of getting scattered outside.

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DAY 5

The root cause of all sufferings is one's mind which is lost in the external world and scattered in worldly objects. Such a mind gradually becomes so much shattered from within that the parts of the body of that person stop functioning properly. In his mind, he is worried all the while. Attachment-Aversion are burning him from within, and fear and anxiety from outside. Under such compelling circumstances, his breathing, instead of functioning properly, would be suppressed, and would not impart the necessary energy to the various parts of the body. For a healthy maintenance of the body, perfect breathing devoid of worries, fears and other fetters is essential.

Through meditation one should realize the truth of the things or objects one's mind is seeking to possess. If one's mind is fixed on fetters and produces physical ailments, one should diagnose them and make efforts to completely uproot them. The root cause of all these ailments is the cultivation of the ten worldly fetters (*bandhans*) namely : (1) Viewing (*drishti*) (2) Doubts (*sanshay*) (3) Undue obligatory considerations for rules and conduct (*sheelvrata paramarsha*) (4) Attachment (*raga*) (5) Aversion (*dwesha*) (6) Love of forms (*roop-raga*) (7) Love of formless sphere (*aroop-raga*) (8) Delusion (*moha*) (9) Ego (*maan*) and (10) Ignorance *(avidya)*.

In reality, all diseases are caused by one's wrong thinking and worries. The root of one's worries is one's mind which unnecessarily gets entangled in the world and gets completely exhausted. As all one's body parts fail to receive optimum quantity of oxygen or life breath, blood circulation becomes defective and thus one driven by the forces of nature suffers immensely. Also, one is not able to heed to the doctors' advice of not brooding over the disease and worry as one has no control over oneself.

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DAY 6

Withdrawal from worldly life is possible only for that person who leads a spiritual life, who practises religious faith, who is a bit of renunciate, who endures some sufferings, who sits in isolation to awaken the right knowledge in himself in solitude and who experiences within himself the truth about life. This is the only way which may be termed as the spiritual way of life. This way is quite opposite of the material way of life, wherein one lives in an extrovert way in accordance with the external world. On the contrary, the spiritual way means turning oneself away from the world to dwell within one's self or one's soul leading an introvert life.

In material life, one continues wandering in the world of five elements i.e. earth, water, fire, air and sky, without sparing time to think about one's spiritual life. But one needs to develop at least some religious faith after hearing discourses from saints or after reading scriptures for the awakening of true knowledge and adoption of the right conduct. Up to this level one learns through right faith. To proceed onwards, one should start identifying the spiritual truth through meditation. One will soon realise that right and wrong actions affect one's mind accordingly. In this way, through meditation in solitude, if one starts understanding one's mind and practises the right conduct, one will learn the spiritual way as one's actions will be undertaken consciously and carefully. One will recognise the inner ignorance *(avidya)*, the worldly fetters of attachment and aversion (*raga-dwesha*) etc. which mislead one. If one is liberated from these after realising their futility, one will experience the eternal divine bliss within oneself. With divine knowledge, the worship will become more enjoyable, comfortable and practical and one will be able to see God in the form of life in the whole universe. One will become the blessed one.

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DAY 7 (*1st Weekend*)

Perfect freedom from worldly bondage complex (*nirvana / moksha*) :

'Nirvana' literally means extinction. A lamp blows out when the oil in it is exhausted. The insatiable worldly passion or desire to obtain something from the world is like oil and the body is like the lamp. As long as the expectations from the world persist, the lamp of sufferings in this world will continue to burn. If through knowledge of truth we observe this world as misery, and if the insatiable worldly passions come to an end, the possibility of rebirth and living in the world will be over. The mind will then be at rest and will manifest itself as consciousness or pure knowledge. This is known as liberation (*nirvana*).

In order to attain liberation, a person must know all the fetters that bind him to the world, identify each of them closely and also attain the strength of the intellect (*buddhi*) to liberate from these fetters. Basically there are ten main fetters mentioned in the scriptures, these are : (1) *drishti - bandhan* (wrong viewing or feeling), (2) *sanshya* (doubt/suspicion/fear), (3) *sheelvrat-paramarsh* (undue obligatory consideration for rules and conduct), (4) *raga* (affection/attachment/love) (5) *dwesha* (malice/ill-will/aversion), (6) *roop-raga* (love of forms/love of objective sphere) (7) *aroop-raga* (love of formless sphere), (8) *moha* (delusion or bewilderment) (9) *maan* (pride/ego/arrogance) and (10) *avidya* (ignorance or spiritual nescience). He must liberate himself from these fetters and realise the eternal bliss of the self which is the manifestation of absolute liberation and which is the ultimate state of being. To achieve this a person has to discipline his life accordingly.

Firstly, the meditator has to withdraw his mind from evil actions, then turn his mind towards his inner self to identify, avoid and eliminate the fetters. Just being a mere witness to the perishing of the fetters, he with his pure mind will gradually be able to see his true self or soul within, manifested as true knowledge and sparkling as eternal bliss, the state of liberation, the ultimate achievement.

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DAY 8

Every individual should fully understand these two modes of living—the spiritual and the materialistic, and the fact that the latter always culminates in sufferings. The end-result of the materialistic mode of living is that one day ears will become deaf, the eyes will turn blind, and the mind will always be suffering, the respiration will be suffocated and these factors will lead to a variety of cardiac, gastro-intestinal and mental ailments. The only patent cure of all these ailments is to wean the mind away from all the materialistic fetters (objects) of the outside world. When a person withdraws his wandering mind from external world and turns it inwards, his life force rejuvenates his body organs to function properly.

All bad habits can easily be eradicated before reaching the age of forty. But after that, these become so powerful that if one wants to get rid of them the mind resists. Also the body will suffer much while eradicating them and it will be possible only if one can endure the physical suffering. Moreover, if one desires to get rid of bad habits, he should make efforts at a slow pace. It will not be difficult to achieve the objective, if so approached. Once the bad habits are eradicated, the mind too will get interested to be associated with the right objects. To give up the habitual comforts, one has to train oneself to endure their deprivation. This will restart the thinking process of the person in the right channel, which had hitherto gone astray in the pursuit of the outer materialistic world. When the mind is thus awakened, one becomes conscious of one's true self. Once a person develops meditation, he starts ignoring the products and persons of the outside world. Thus, when his mind gets liberated from the external world, he feels an inner bliss and realizes that there is one Consciousness-in-General *(Paramatma)* controlling and pervading all physical bodies. This is the ultimate destination *(paramdham or summum bonum)* of his spiritual life.

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DAY 9

The two sensibilities, viz the feeling of pleasure (*sukh*), and the feeling of pain (*dukh*) are the two worldly fetters (*bandhan*) which bind the human being and all living species. The mind starts liking the object which attracts it. This liking is termed as attachment (*raga*). This attachment soon enslaves the individual and hence it is called as the 'fetter of attachment'. Similarly, certain objects which are painful in experience and which are undesirable to the mind, cause aversion (*dwesha*). This is the fetter of aversion. Slowly these two types of feelings of pleasure and pain, develop roots in one's mind and become one's second nature. The habit thus formed establishes a permanent foothold in one's life, robs his freedom making him dance as per the dictates of one's habits. All this is an internal latent drama and is a camouflage of ignorance *(avidya)* which takes over control right from childhood and overshadows the real knowledge, through its confabulations and confusions. It is imperative to remove this fetter of ignorance *(avidya)* to enable the real spiritual knowledge to sprout up.

Among all living beings, only a human being has been endowed with the faculty of intellect (*buddhi*) to acquire and develop right knowledge through dispelling ignorance *(avidya)*, through thinking, analysis and discrimination. He should not perform actions under the influence of habits to acquire and enjoy some petty, trivial, personal gains which may prove harmful for his well-being. Ultimately, every individual has to comprehend all the inner truths of his own being with the help of his intellect by destroying the veil of ignorance *(avidya)*. The camouflage which is hiding the right knowledge is in the form of ignorance. Developing your intellectual power of discretion are the necessary tools for its removal.

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DAY 10

God is present within every individual, whether he is aware or not. God in the form of divine consciousness manages and controls the life of every individual. Though universally present, this divine power is completely invisible and nobody experiences its presence. Its realisation is blissful. It is devoid of lust, anger, the sense of thine-and-mine etc. It accompanies an individual in the most subtle invisible form, as *'sanskars'* or impressions, at the time of birth and leaves when he dies. Even though his physical body perishes, the divine consciousness or soul persists and is immortal and permanent. The individual, however, remains quite unaware of this power during his life, owing to the grand camouflage created by his ignorance *(avidya)*.

Man should himself experience the existence of this omnipresent life force *(elan vital)* within himself. It acts as the refreshing and rejuvenating force during his sleeping state, but the person does not experience it during his wakeful state, because during that period, all his time and energy are spent in engagements and interactions of the outer world. All the inner secrets and truth, thus, remain concealed under the veil of ignorance. He remains totally unaware of the happenings, transformations and transactions taking place within himself and is also oblivious of the power controlling them.

For the manifestation of the divine consciousness man should devote some time and make efforts to remove and destroy his ignorance to realize that all his worldly actions lead to a distressful life. The only foolproof and sure medicine for him is to consolidate and concentrate his mental powers within himself which are engaged in diverse external worldly pursuits.

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DAY 11

All the bodily functions are managed and controlled by the life-god. This power through its divine dynamism, exhibits itself every moment in the form of its ever new revelations, new creations and reproductions, without end. The seeker will learn to resist the life-god through the divine power of consciousness, as he progresses on the path, with the help of meditation, withdrawing his mind from outside world and concentrating it within itself. Then, the mind will be able to consolidate itself. One is not aware of one's breathing process during sleep. Likewise one should get absorbed in the meditation to the extent of losing awareness of his breathing process. One should silently sit down, with all his senses, mind completely dormant or at rest, and fully consolidate and concentrate within oneself. Thus one achieves the blissful state of God realization, the ultimate purpose or the supreme goal of one's existence, devoid of all types of griefs, sufferings, diseases and disorders, which are the products of the external world.

When the mind is drowned in worldly worries and engagements, one's breathing is suppressed and remains incomplete, severely affecting the proper working of one's heart and other body-parts, and giving rise to various physical maladies and disorders. To overcome this grave situation one should always keep one's mind peaceful, poised and undisturbed. One should, therefore, nurture only a bare minimum interest in the external world which is essential to meet his bodily needs, the demands of the upbringing of children, catering to core necessities of one's family and society. If thus, one disengages his energy from worldly pursuits and directs the same within, where the Almighty God resides, it will give one release *(mukti)* from worldly bondages and enable one to enjoy eternal bliss, here and afterwards.

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DAY 12

If an individual is able to examine his inner thoughts himself, he will clearly perceive that during his pre-occupations with certain objects, he did not have smooth breathing. This type of incomplete breathing is not good for health. As soon as a person starts meditating upon this truth, he will start breathing smoothly and normally. His worry will also lessen a bit, because his mind is to some extent free from the conflict of attachment-aversion (*raga-dwesha*) and this freedom will bring calm and comfort to his agitated mind. If he fails to meditate in order to abate his worldly passions, and if he goes to sleep with an anxious mental state his breathing process will function in a disturbed and abnormal manner and he will have horrifying painful dreams.

Attachment is a very strong fetter (*bandhan*) which is of no benefit to the individual. If he dies while ruminating his attachments, in the next life, he may acquire the life and physique of a very lustful and sensuous animal. As a matter of fact, this is how the next life (*yoni*) is determined. All human beings have been gifted this godly power of creation. This means that the individual gets the same type of life created for him, as he wishes for himself in the innermost core of his mind. It is indeed a great mystery that whatever a person resolves and whatever wishes with his truest, purest and sincere heart, this great power creates for him exactly the same or similar life in his next incarnation.

For sharing His divine bliss permanently he has to merge in God forever after freeing himself from all fetters, and acquiring a thorough understanding of all inner truths. This is attained through a mastery over the forces of personal nature viz. lust, anger, attachment and aversion etc. Also he acquires proper breathing and his body remains healthy in this life.

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DAY 13

In order to be free from all the fetters, one must understand the futility of his entanglements in the external world and then emancipate his mind from these fetters. This is called the worship of *Harihar*. *Harihar* means to conquer mind, to withdraw inwards, 'to prevent or postpone'. After emancipating himself, he has to practise the correct way of inhaling and exhaling. His mind will thus experience and enjoy a unique freedom.

Through careful introspection and repeated auto-suggestions of enlightened thoughts he should strive to wean his mind away from the external world. During this period, his mind will either try to escape into the external world under some pretence or adopt the excuse of sleeping. At this juncture the individual should make efforts to avoid sleep considering it to be a bad quality and a hurdle in the path of salvation.

When the mind blindly runs after the material world and when the mind seeks the shelter of sleep after getting tired of the external, material world—both these conditions represent the insatiable, worldly passions (*trishna*). One is called '*bhav trishna*', i.e. the passions pushing the mind towards the external world, and the other is known as '*vibhav-trishna*', i.e. the irresistible urge to withdraw, retire and sleep after getting completely exhausted by worldly pursuits, '*bhav-trishna*' means 'being something in the world or becoming something in the world, meaning to be the friend or foe of somebody or to become a benefactor for someone. This 'being' and 'becoming' is an insatiable worldly passion and is aptly termed as '*bhav trishna*' (strong and passionate attachment for the world) or '*bhavsagar*' (the ocean of strong and passionate attachment). In *vibhav trishna*, though after apparent withdrawing from the world, the mind seeks shelter in sleep, but it carries the same world, hiding itself in sleep and is pushed back into the world after waking up.

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DAY 14 (*2nd weekend*)

Worldly fetters :

The power that creates and runs the world keeps all creatures bound in the fetters of attachment, aversion, ego, affection etc, expressing itself as joys or sorrows, through the tendencies of desire, anger, greed etc. Under the influence of these fetters to being very obedient to them, a person remains satisfied and has no desire to seek liberation from their domain. Consequently, the bliss arising from the liberation of these fetters remains hidden from him through a veil of ignorance.

The person, who realises that these fetters are the cause of all miseries, would like to liberate himself from their hold. For this a person needs to resist the natural tendencies or the natural powers, which motivate him to seek pleasures creating an attachment for them.

1. Fetter of wrong viewing :

Bound by the fetter of wrong viewing, a person is bound by many types of feelings and actions for pleasure and pain, and he has to perform many actions willingly or unwillingly. It is a product of the mind and has no independent existence outside; also it is only for relationships. He projects various objects and persons in his body which is changing every moment. He thinks that wealth is good, family is good, and is thus bound by his viewing. He is a victim of wrong viewing and does not recognize the spiritual truth. He thinks that the whole world is true or permanent and the body is the truth.

Ignoring the wrong view means that one substitutes the right view for the wrong view that breeds doubt, enmity, fear, affection, ego, insult etc. in the mind. One should view God as universal consciousness that is present in everybody and that runs the body machine of all, and keeping Him in view, one should observe right conduct. In this way, wrong tendencies like desire, anger, greed, jealousy that arise in the mind because of wrong view will be overcome.

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DAY 14 (*IInd Weekend*) Continued .....

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(1)

Natal or natural being prevails as blemish one,
Through like view, wish and will at length for wrong act run;
Earnest striver, mindful, foresees to what all tends,
Avoid that course which in wrongs and pains lastly ends.

(2)

In passion of eating, sleep and all appetite,
And, of self-expression, live wakeful, right and bright;
May then, move amongst all, even go all alone,
Live blest ever with peace; never be woe-begone.

(3)

One though lives with reason; may evil-being delude,
Telling mere outward life, inward hidden elude;
Go deep to know truth deep; love meditation to cure,
Subtle ills and evils know, quit all, be secure.

(4)

One keeps want in one's view and desires to fulfil,
If by indecision not see to serve or kill;
Lingering wants ill-factors in turn seize one to rack,
Recurrent produce their will unanswered one's being slack.

(5)

Sensation of slack being in experience is fine,
Who is deceived by it in all ills want confine;
Goes wisdom with it weak and resistance too low,
To know one's good; slow mind more makes wrong view, will flow.

(6)

Not wisdom being revived* slack one cannot reject,
Want unserved which makes one feel wretched to reflect;
Evil-being makes one peep into what to pursue,
That joy with it one's self won't last which dwells in view.

(7)

With chain of wants one sleeps, so with them does awake,
Not two-fold passion thus condescend to forsake;
Suffers one loss of peace, 'll health and restlessness,
How in twice chained mind truth gains access and success.

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DAY 15

Right knowledge dawns only on the awakened mind. One then realises that the blind pursuit of persons and products of the external world and escaping into sleep after withdrawing from the external world, are all useless efforts and do not lead one to one's cherished goal *(summum bonum)*. So far all one's knowledge related to the external world acquired since childhood was gained through the network of the insatiable worldly passions like attachment and aversion. Now, the inner spiritual knowledge will establish that it will be much beneficial for oneself to protect oneself from material knowledge gained since childhood. Also one will realize that the sleep blessed by God is the best and peaceful sleep when the mind rejuvenates after withdrawing from the external world may lead to experience divine bliss.

Thus, after understanding all the rules and norms of the spiritual life, one has to mould one's life accordingly, in the right direction developing right knowledge. The awakened mind which is no more sleeping, will be able to comprehend all the machinations of the various worldly passions which compel an individual's mind to possess the object of its fancy by fair or foul means, leading to pain and suffering in the end. As one understands all these inner truths, the ignorance residing within one will cease to exist along with the end of insatiable worldly passions. All this is divine or spiritual knowledge which annihilates ignorance and the individual feels emancipated and unburdened, experiencing the divine bliss of God.

In essence, one has to first learn the principles of spiritual life and then live the life accordingly. One should withdraw from the external world slowly and gradually as any hasty step would prove counter-productive. One should take slow steps like minimising engagements with the world, sitting in solitude etc., which will also help him in normal breathing. Thus liberated, his mind will experience '*sat-chit-ananda*', the ultimate bliss.

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DAY 16

Every individual should enrich his worship of the Divine by cultivating divine attributes in his personality. In order to recognize the inner truth, one has to sit in solitude and experience the divine knowledge in his soul, avoiding lethargy and sleep; he should resort to the loud recitation of the Divine name. During introspection one should feel that remaining engaged with the objects of the external world for such a long time was without any gain. A stern watch on the stream of thoughts in view of these facts helps one gradually to become conscious of one's self. Understanding the mind through observation and introspection, one should open one's inner discerning eye and acquire correct divine knowledge and inner tranquillity.

In order to comprehend all the inner truths, one should cultivate the habit of sitting in solitude and practise meditation. In the beginning, one may not comprehend anything; even then one should gradually and at a slow pace, increase one's time of sitting in meditation. Also, whenever his mind tries to run after the objects and persons of the world, the person should make efforts to disengage from these ties, by reciting words of wisdom like : "There is nothing in the external world" and so on. He may, however, remonstrate: "No, no, there is as yet much to think and seek, and still there are many personal interests in the external world to pursue". In such a situation, which commonly arises, the individual should suggest to his mind. "All right, you better think again and reconsider." All the same, during meditation, the individual should march on the path patiently and constantly examine his inner urges and should start understanding their import until he reaches the goal.

The spiritual life grants one freedom from all worldly sufferings, and thereby establishes within one's soul the love for God which always brings peace, contentment and eternal joy.

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DAY 17

Bound by the fetters of personal nature right from one's birth, the inner forces of the individual—the cognitive force (conscious energy) and the vital force (the life energy), both get so much involved in the external material world that, instead of producing physical well being and mental happiness, they start producing sufferings in the end. If the life in the external world is to be lived thoughtfully and according to noble and religious principles, one's involvement in it should be limited only to the extent of fulfilling one's physical needs and duties should be performed by one in a disciplined manner.

Eight different elements, i.e. earth, fire, water, air, sky, sun, moon and one's sentient spirit—prompted by their respective gods - have joined to produce life in this world. In the same manner in which these forces have combined to create the physical body, they have generated their respective inherent electrical waves like lust (*kaam*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), delusion (*moha*) etc. which come along with life.

The forces within a human being are primarily of two types : one is cognitive force, and the other is vital force. The type of knowledge one possesses will determine the action one will undertake. As is one's mental state, so will be one's breathing activity and consequently so will be the performance of his other vital organs like heart, kidneys, pancreas, liver etc. When both knowledge and mind, are tied to the external world, the generation of energy by the breathing process will also be hampered resulting in a discomfort everywhere in the body including the mind.

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DAY18

Our ancient seers and sages analyzed the means for achieving happiness and contentment. They practically realized in their own lives that the mind should not be tied to the external world to such a great extent that it spoils its own existence and destroys its happiness and peace. Happiness, the only goal of one's existence, is possible if there is no suffering. Suffering is the result of the fetters of attachment, aversion, pride and desire.

The learned seers remind the seekers to first resolve in their minds to achieve liberation, that is, preparing their mind to get rid of the worldly fetters. Then the seekers need to recognize that all actions are motivated by the divine power called God (organised whole or cosmic self) in the form of *Brahma* (the creator in the cosmic trinity), *Brahma* who personifies '*Rajoguna*' operates and functions through all persons, and the son of *Brahma*, called *'Prajapati'* (life-god) resides independently in the body of every human being, in the form of vital force.

The forces of *Brahma* which are all-pervasive and manifested as *Rajoguna* (desire, anger, greed, self and pride) controls all the actions of all the persons in the world. There is no 'I' involved in all these actions. The word 'I' and 'you' will become one entity (synonymous), when the individual, with the help of his intellect, understands the impact of the forces of the three gunas (*sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*) and liberates himself from these forces and works for his own well-being, happiness and comfort. If the person is unable to maintain his well-being and poise, it is because of his ego or 'I', the force of *Rajoguna*, that is exhibited in every situation. This ego, which is self pride and infact which is restricted to one's physical body needs to be differentiated from the universal Supreme Ego, which is all pervasive and which performs all actions.

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DAY 19

Everybody possesses within himself a part of Consciousness-in-General *(paramatma)* with its divine dynamism *(maya)*. This power of Consciousness-in-General, also called God, maintains and controls all the functions of the body while one is awake or asleep. As the power of consciousness goes on developing spiritual knowledge (cognitive force) the action force (conative force), too goes on developing and continually functions without a stop.

Although one does not know the reason it is a fact that the material world disappears in sleep. In a similar manner,while fully awake one can control one's consciousness to such an extent that one becomes oblivious of the material world and at that stage experiences spiritual peace of God (the organised whole) or Consciousness-in-General (*paramatma*).

When things do not turn up according to one's wishes, and even go contrary, it clearly indicates that one is not leading one's life on the correct course. If one adopts wrong ways, there will be only sufferings and sorrows. If one wants happiness in life, one should put his life on the right path that leads to one's ultimate well-being. If and when one becomes aware of all these facts, and if one refrains from the dictates of one's habits to attract temporary comforts terminating into sufferings, take it for granted that the spiritual knowledge of Lord Krishna has descended in one's mind and that the Lord will control and drive the chariot of his physical existence. Through meditation, one can awaken the spiritual knowledge within oneself and become a beneficiary like Arjun. In Sanskrit the word 'Arjun' means 'the one who earns' or 'the one who is inspired to follow the correct path'. Thus, one will successfully attain one's ultimate and cherished spiritual destination (*Param-dham*).

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DAY 20

In social life, one develops certain habits which force one to live in the same old set ways. To get rid of these hidden urges and tendencies one has to cultivate within oneself some '*punda*'. In Sanskrit, *punda* means intelligence. It functions in two ways: one is that which enables the individual to take his decisions, and the other it provides the protection to individuals from evil and harmful objects and persons. The owner of this type of intelligence *(punda)* is called a *"Pundit"*. *Punda* denotes how a person should conduct himself ethically. It also denotes his ability to contemplate, think and reflect while solving a problem. Secondly, *punda* operates through the force of compulsive habits which demand 'act act.' The force of compulsive habits is as strong as a natural force. These two forces, i.e. the force of intelligence and the force of habit are always in conflict.

Actions performed in previous births become a strong latent force in the form of '*Sanskaras*', which influence and control one's actions in the present life as inner urges which become a veritable force, like the force of compulsive habits. On the other hand, the force of spiritual knowledge, in the form of intelligence and intellect, dictates that present actions should be performed as per its directions because spiritual force ensures spiritual salvation of human beings.

Only a human being has the chance to work for his spiritual salvation because it is only in human birth that the power of discrimination can be developed. A person should critically think and review his past actions involving his mind, eyes, ears, nose and speech, and after recognizing his weaknesses and worng tendencies he should endeavour to be alert and careful from that very moment, to manifest Right Faith (true religion) in his life.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

2. Worldly Fetters : Doubts/Suspicions/Fears (*Sanshay*)

Doubt or suspicion is as to what the nature of some object is and how it comes into being. The more a person pursues worldly pleasures and chases them, the more he is forced to doubt whether he will lose those pleasures. He is worried that something adverse may happen. This doubt whether some pleasure will or will not be available to him always haunts him. Similarly, he doubts the fear of pain, misery in relationships with persons and objects, even religious faith etc. and gets entangled and develops a mood of hesitation which does not let him enjoy peace of mind. Doubts keep haunting the mind again and again and obstruct right action.

The field of the fetter of doubt is so vast that it can be measured only through meditation. Even if one renounces attachment, aversion, anger etc, doubt continues to stand in the way. This fetter alone obstructs the renunciation of other fetters like attachment and aversion, ego, delusion, spiritual ignorance which one may wish to renounce. One may escape it only after a great effort. It keeps on arising even over trifles. It obstructs even the movement of breath, i.e. smooth breathing. Therefore, a person must practise renunciation of doubt during the practice of respiration. It is for this reason that mindful respiration has been recommended. Through this process, while renouncing all fetters, this mindful respiration is carried on so that the power of all the fetters may be weakened effectively without applying much thought.

Regarding doubt, Lord Krishna has observed that those who are ignorant and who lack faith, i.e. who do not have the knowledge of truth and who develop doubt even over trifles, will perish. In other words, they cannot experience any joy of being humans and their souls do not attain any happiness in the other world.

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DAY 22

One should identify one's inner urges, understand one's weaknesses and strive to eradicate them. In doing so, one must try to develop one's power of meditation to comprehend the inner truth, through living some time in solitude and seclusion. When one earnestly starts comprehending the inner truth during meditation, thus awakening spiritual knowledge in one, then one day, the omnipresent God, abiding within every being will reveal Himself in the form of eternal, spiritual bliss. After giving up his selfish worldly tendencies once for all, if he becomes one with God or cosmic self, one's mind will never feel the loss of these worldly mundane comforts.

The path to spiritual deliverance, as per the great scholars' recommendation can be reached through five active methods; (i) Confidence in right faith (*shraddha*), (ii) Spiritual energy *(veerya)*, (iii) Presence of mind/Mindfulness / Heedfulness *(smriti)*, (iv) Meditation/Absorbed Meditation (*dhyan/samadhi*) and (v) Truth bearing knowledge/Superior Knowledge (*pragna*).

To remove the fetters of this world, right religious confidence *(shraddha)* naturally has to be the first step in following the ethical religious path leading to God realization. One has to strongly maintain one's resolve and sincerely nurture one's spiritual confidence in right faith *(shraddha)*. Meditation is the only means to achieve the true spiritual knowledge, and to develop it one needs energy *(veerya)*, as well as presence of mind/mindfulness/heedfulness *(smriti)*. If one is conscious and alert while practising mindfulness, one will be able to avoid wrong actions without being a prey to the force of compulsive habits, which are subservient to latent inner impressions (*sanskaras*).

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DAY 23

When one continuously avoids wrong deeds, one's mind too will become alert and awake and it will start recognising inner spiritual truths. By such continuous revelation of the inner spiritual truths one becomes very engrossed in them so as to be oblivious of the external mundane world. One who reaches this stage has cultivated the art of meditation to experience the bliss within oneself. This is the result of the concentration and consolidation of the mind within oneself. One who has thus won over the lure of the five senses, has liberated one's mind from the mundane world and joined the blessed company of the limitless cosmic consciousness called *Parmeshwar*.

This is an indisputable fact that every individual faces problems of varied nature during his life span in the external world. These problems arise owing to his interactions with the objects and persons in the external world and render him restless all the while. The only remedy to bring peace and calm to such a disturbed mind is to consolidate and concentrate one's mind which is scattered in the external world. Also, there is a dire need to revitalise the person's life-force through similar efforts. Only then he will be able to establish within him such peace and happiness that would not let him experience any painful dreams even during his sleep.

In essence, one must try to recognize the futile worldly knowledge and avoid it to initiate spiritual life. Only then one's mental energy and life energy will get liberated and disentangled from the external world, making room for the bliss of all-pervading spiritual knowledge to be enjoyed by the seeker.

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DAY 24

Owing to his constant and continuous engagement in the external world, the individual reaches a stage when the cognitive energy and the conative energy within his mind are reduced to zero. The common man is not aware of this fact until his mind faces pangs of stress and strain. During that time of stress and strain, even his breathing becomes abnormal and incomplete and results in a crop of diseases. He loses his self-control and becomes a helpless slave of his situation. This helplessness of the individual is the result of fetters.

To get rid of such worldly fetters is known as spiritual deliverance *(mukti)*, and it is possible through sincere and sustained efforts and by gradually leading a disciplined life outlined in the scriptures by the great masters. Remember that repeated actions lead to the formation of habit, referred to as personal nature or second nature. With the passage of time, this personal nature assumes the form of temperament *(swabhav)* of an individual. The individual starts treating his "personal nature" *(prakriti)* and his temperament *(swabhav)* as his true self. His personal nature (habits and temperament) fully controls his life and behavior.

The Bhagavad Gita and other scriptures explain that Nature *(prakriti)* consists of two different forces ; (i) External physical forces, represented by the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky) and (ii) Internal personal forces represented by individual habits and temperament. When the individual controls both these forces, he achieves the highest status in the world, which is only possible by actively pursuing the path of spiritual deliverance and by cultivating and nurturing the following five divine qualities: (i) Right religious confidence (*shraddha*), (ii) Personal Energy *(veerya)* (iii) Mindfulness *(smriti)* (iv) Meditation or Absorbed meditation *(dhyan)* and (v) Superior intelligence *(pragna)*.

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DAY 25

The liberation of an individual from the force of his own nature (habits) is a pre-condition for his mind to withdraw from its wanderings in the external (material) world. This liberation will lead to his physical and mental wellbeing and happiness. To achieve it, the individual should first cultivate right religious confidence (*shraddha*) and resolute courage *(veerya)*. He should give up all bad habits and cultivate good habits in his life, which is only possible through necessary energy. Also, his mind should always be alert, through the development of the mindfulness *(smriti)*, leading to the practice of good deeds.Mindfulness *(smriti)* means control over the mind and heedfulness to foresee what is going to happen and how one should react. To follow the desirable course, one's mind should be ever heedful to avoid the wrong path (habitual path) for the sake of minor comforts.

The indulgence in physical gratifications does not let us maintain our mindfulness. Compulsive habits and personal nature strongly attract us to the indulgence in gratifications which needs to be checked strongly to perform our deeds in correct and desirable manner. As soon as we give up our compulsive habits, our mind will experience a great satisfaction and happiness, known as the happiness of an emancipated soul.

All types of habits are acquired through our sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin), our mind and intellect. The intellect makes decisions according to demands and the whim of habits. Compulsive habits are the forces which strongly drive the individual to function under their control and direction. To weaken and curb the effects of compulsive habits, one has to cultivate and maintain mindfulness which will also make one courageous and alert.

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DAY 26

An individual gets attached and tied to the world for the satisfaction of his personal motives. In the Bhagavad Gita, this tendency has been called *'kaam'* or *'kaamna'* (desire). As a matter of fact, the individual does not know how to live in solitude and all alone. Just consider, how much happiness and satisfaction God grants an individual while he is sleeping all alone. Following this analogy, if the individual could live in solitude (in himself) while he is fully awake, he would not lose and miss anything.

If one so desires, one can witness the whole world in one's meditation. Sitting in meditation, one can open his ears and make them alert, and listen to all the sounds and discussions taking place in the world. If one wants to see in darkness with his eyes shut, the whole world will come alive before one's mind as in a dream. For all this, first of all one must, recognise and comprehend in oneself the Universal Force which operates the human body machine.

Man always wants to become an important individual. He experiences and relishes happiness by achieving a status. This strong urge has been called as the *Bhav-Sagar* or the sea of insatiable desires *(bhav-trishna)*. In Sanskrit, the word *'bhav'* means 'becoming' or 'being.' Man wants that he should attain (become or be) "something or become important" i.e., learned, intellectual or a wealthy person to command respect and honour. This insatiable desire is so strong and overpowering that on failing to satisfy it through honest, right and ethical means, he resorts to dishonest and devious ways to satisfy his ego.

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DAY 27

It is, thus, evident that everybody in this world is busy in developing and flourishing his ego. The desire of the ego 'to become or to be' somebody very significant in the world is so strong that right from childhood, the ego goes on developing and expanding. Actually, the ego has no definite way to ensure its existence for ever and maintain its glory, except through making false claims.

A person does not know that he can lead a happy and comfortable life by living within his soul unless he recognises that one supreme power residing in him and performing his bodily functions, is also simultaneously controlling all the events of the universe. Once if he recognises this supreme power (this ultimate reality) all his ignorance *(avidya)* will be dissolved for ever. Ignorance *(avidya)* means the veil over the real soul. Because of this veil, the existence of the real soul is generally not experienced, although it carries out all the bodily functions of the individual. Besides, though not perceptible, this Supreme Power also manages and controls all the activities of the universe with its cognitive power (knowledge). The individual can comprehend and grasp this Supreme Power, only when his mind gets extricated from the futile objects of the world.

To achieve the goal, he has to conquer and control his sleep a bit. This is not to say that one should give up sleep completely, but that he should restrict it to sleeping hours only. When thus one controls his sleep with his own efforts, in due course his inner eye will open and he will be able to perceive that Supreme Power which is abiding with him.

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DAY 28 (*4th Weekend*)

3. Worldly fetters : Undue obligatory consideration for rules and conduct (*sheelvrata-paramarsh*):

After having been born in the world, a human being regards many types of conduct as duty. Impressions of rules and conduct get deep-rooted in his consciousness and push him in the same direction in which he has been moving so far if he tries to renounce them. Also, the worldly conduct is determined by self-interest. Even when a person adopting the path of liberation renounces the worldly conduct as also his useless self-interest, the thoughts of his earlier dealings with others and those of pleasing them will persist and continue to worry him and rob him of his peace of mind. He ascribes all this to the crisis of duty and believes that he had not conducted himself as he should have done and that the things did happen as they should not have happened. This is a strong fetter, called as *sheelvrata-paramarsha*, which engulfs him in the fire of repentance, agony and pain when he broods over his lapses of conduct.

In order to renounce this fetter, the meditator should resolve that he would, in future avoid doing the wrong actions that he had done out of ignorance, and that he would not worry and dwell in the past. Through awakening his right knowledge he should watch them steadily like a spectator without much heed and see them disappearing with the passage of time. Also a person not unable to ignore the actions of others, gets entangled in wrong thoughts about their unjust behavior. To overcome this, a person must obtain freedom through right knowledge, meditation and patience. If needed a person may realize the triviality of his worthless thoughts through reason and meditation, trusting in the teachings of great men. Also, he must patiently without seeking refuge in any intoxicant or drug endure the pain afflicting the mind due to this fetter, Patience, means to endure pain with the power of right knowledge.

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DAY-28 (*4th Weekend) continued ...*

Verses of the Divine Spritual life

(8)

What good is worldly being if inconstant 'tis found,
And passion for non-being with forced blind darkness bound;
What did pleasures, go if health and peace down the spout,
Worldly blessings are a curse, sorrows if bring about.

(9)

Nothing in flux of life is constant but in view,
In persons drive intense intentions to pursue;
Quality of sensations, transient, for wrong being plead,
With them view, wish and will decide what life one to lead.

(10)

One's relative worldly being for well-being won't prevail,
Its self is ever changed no constant to avail;
Seeing its bondage as hell, in soul peace permanent,
Keep for it being refined, live life all intelligent.

(11)

What is eaten is food, and being eaten maintain,
Body's health, peace in mind, spiritual sameness to gain;
Varieties and richness of it are not to last,
Dead burden will they prove and good to chain one fast.

(12)

Not variety of food and richness gives good health,
But freedom of one's being to possess is true wealth;
With simple food enjoy soundness all birds and beasts,
See round of all disease, men with luxuries and feasts.

(13)

As one in poverty not think rich foods to use,
Lives but with what's obtained, though excess may confuse;
Even though one is rich, in disease goes restrained,
With wisdom and insight so live that blessedness is gained.

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DAY 29

When a person comprehends spiritual force in him, he becomes aware of the various machinations of his mind. The split–second reaction to every momentary action is the most important function of mind because it is continually recording and registering each and every event. This mind, which controls and operates the human body-machine, also exists in all other living creatures and is given the name '*Prajapati*' which imposes a very rigid regime of its rules and conditions and forces every living creature to adopt its sets of standards.

The religious life can be practised and lived by opposing the demands of one's habitual nature with courage and by adopting the demands and ethical way of living. At such a time, the mind starts inducing sleep (lethargy). One has to oppose one's mind to conquer the desire to sleep, and keep it active and alert. When one's mind thus becomes active and starts thinking, during this thinking (introspection) and meditation, one will get flashes of the inner reality to quench his various queries of life.

The person who is lost in the worldly engagements is not aware of his inner existence. He thinks that comforts of life exist in the external world and in the company of other persons. That is why he develops relationships with others in order to gain and enjoy those worldly comforts and keeps the world within himself even while sleeping. He does not try even a bit to understand that immortal God abides with him and His forces manage and control the world as per His orders and His will.

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DAY 30

A person has to be mindful in order to understand his inner powers. Further he has to be brave and courageous to remain mindful and also understand the divine power abiding inside him. This will also make him conscious of his worldly fetters like *drishti-bandhan* (wrong viewing), *sanshay-bandhan* (suspicion), *sheelvrata-bandhan* (rules and regulations), *raga-bandhan* (attachment), *dwesha-bandhan* (malice or aversion) etc. The last two mentioned fetters of attachment and aversion (*raga-dwesha bandhan*) are always present in the form of '*chitta*', a very deep and strong fortress of the mind.'*chitta*' personifies constant thinking and pre-occupations with a certain topic which flows within the individual like a stream of consciousness. When the fetter of *raga* seeps into the mind and overpowers it, that state is called '*moha chitta*' or attachment consciousness, or '*moha-bandhan*'. It is only the thoughts of attachment and aversion that keeps one's mind busy and ruminating about them and act as stumbling blocks in divine deliverance *(mukti)*.

God in the form of cosmological consciousness is ever present and all-pervading, everywhere in the whole world. One should develop a pious attitude and respectful sentiments for this intangible and imperceptible reality. One should be happy in others' happiness. One should develop a friendly attitude *(maitri)*, sympathy and compassion for others' sufferings (*karuna*), praise for their good qualities *(mudita)*, the refraining from noticing their demerits *(upeksha)*, and tolerance for their minor mistakes and undesirable behavior (*kshama*). In essence, one should develop a pious, respectful aud religious attitude towards others. Though such a person outwardly appears as a common man, he is in reality an awakened soul constantly established in God.

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DAY 31

The philosophy of Yoga declares that unless one earnestly cultivates and practises the four divine virtues of (i) friendly attitude *(maitri)*, (ii) sympathy *(karuna)*, (iii) praise-worthy attitude towards good qualities of others *(mudita)* and (iv) practising indifference towards sins and bad qualities of others *(upeksha)*, one's mind is not fit and ready for meditation. Divine and deliberate earnest meditation means that one should not at all bother about the condition of the external world, whether good or bad, and that one should withdraw one's mind from it with the help of honest and sincere commitment to meditation. When the mind with utmost attention to and total concentration only upon one thing (idea or object) at one time, ceases to notice or acknowledge its own existence, this high mental state is called meditation.

Meditate on others' happiness and thereby let your own mind experience its happiness along with others' happiness (*maitri bhavana*). All this amounts to meditation which one so much loves to practise. One should always respect the planned and organised scheme of God, the omnipresent and omnipotent one, and always remember that cultivation of a 'friendly attitude'*(maitri)* is a pre-requisite to meditation. Also one has to cultivate and develop the ten divine virtues, which are repeatedly indicated earlier, and which are essential for spiritual liberation. Of these, the first four i.e. the friendly attitude, sympathy or compassion, praise-worthy attitude towards good qualities of others and practising indifference towards the sins and bad qualities of others, will greatly control and regulate one's conduct and behaviour towards others. Always remember that a person behaves towards others according to his mental outlook, mental disposition and mental make-up.

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FEBRUARY

The Mind Fetters

A sound mind in a sound body, so goes the saying. The human mind is a wonderful instrument. It enables us to think, to know, to feel, to remember and so on. But it is only a partial instrument and so the knowledge it gives too is not objective or complete. It is because the mind is caught up in a number of negative emotions and attitudes which Swamiji calls fetters. The mind is eternally swaying like a pendulum between attachment *(raga)* and aversion *(dwesha)*. Man desires to possess what he likes and tries to avoid what he dislikes. He fears the loss of the persons and objects of his attachment and hates the presence of the persons and objects of his aversion. This in turn gives rise to further fetters like wrong viewing, greed, jealousy, hatred, fault finding, suspicion and a score of similar negative attitudes and feelings. All these undesirable thoughts and emotions crop up to distract us once we sit for meditation. One has to eliminate them and free the mind from its innumerable shackles. It is not at all an easy task. Yet through constant practice, perseverance and earnest efforts the task can be achieved. Once the body posture *(asana)* is stabilized, the next stage of meditation is the emancipation of the mind from its fetters.

Editor

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Day 1



FEBRUARY

When a person shuns the duplicity in his nature of being different covertly and overtly and possesses an integrated outlook while dealing with other person, he will automatically transfer a similar real, honest, friendly attitude to him in return. This subtle and silent intuitive transformation is a miracle of the spiritual power. Just as he experiences happiness within his ownself by enhancing and enriching his meditation, he should similarly influence others in the world in such a way that their lives become more comfortable. Leading such a life is both great and glorious, as he feels happy in others' happiness and shares it. Such friendly attitude (*maitri-bhav*) towards others is the first spiritual virtue (power). In the same way, one should cultivate sympathy and compassion for those who are in distress and suffering, to develop the second spiritual virtue (power). Moreover, keeping always in mind that this entire palpable existence in the external world is the manifestation of the Almighty, God, one must be cautious against committing any blunder, sin or crime against this visible existence, because this may block one's path to spiritual salvation *(moksha)*. For this end, one must keep one's manner upright, continually watch one's behavior, which is controlled by fetters like affection and aversion *(raga-dwesha)* which tie him to the material world.

All the Hindu scriptures declare: "Only consciousness (soul) needs salvation. Only consciousness achieves salvation- Only consciousness can be fully liberated - The dead matter needs no salvation or liberation." Consciousness means, 'to be aware and alive, or to make oneself aware and active.' It does not mean 'dead and inactive'. The dynamism of potent '*maya*' ever present in the external material world makes one's mind oblivious of the spiritual life and a prisoner of fetters.

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DAY 2

When one repeatedly makes one's mind 'aware' or 'conscious' of something and when one repeatedly ponders over something, it amounts to 'meditation'. In this manner one's mind automatically gets 'awakened' or becomes 'aware', and meditation becomes easy. Instead of flooding the mind with emotions related to the external world, one should strive to train one's mind to experience the right emotions and in the right manner to become automatically conscious of the great, glorious and rich joys of one's inner spiritual life. Also, one should try to observe and notice only the divine consciousness in every person.

As explained earlier, there are ten powers of liberation *(mukti)* from worldly bondage, which need to be cultivated with great efforts by an individual, as one does not get these virtues by birth. When one acquires them, one need not crave for anything else. One should remember at this juncture, that satisfying the needs of one's body is not a selfish work, and that it should be undertaken to keep it alive and healthy. Here, one needs to differentiate between the needs of the body and the desires of the body. While the former are satisfied with performing very little work, the latter ones are seldom satisfied. Also it should be kept in mind the comforts one receives from the work taken from others or through material products is selfish and ephemeral.

The fact to be noted is that the physical body is always changing from birth, necessitating a constant change in its desires and the corresponding modes and means of satisfying the desires. Nothing is permanent as everything is in a flux and changing. So, if one does not possess the desired ten virtues to a justified level, one is sure to face stumbling blocks at every step. The right knowledge to develop these powers (virtues) and retaining them is called God's adoration and real devotion (*ananya bhakti*) which leads to the ultimate bliss.

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DAY 3

The ten virtues were cultivated and developed by the saints and sages of yore. Even some of them used to live in the midst of the material world and yet they reached the summit of the mountain of salvation and liberation. It may be noted that meditation or truth-seeking behavior *(dhyana)* and truth bearing knowledge *(pragna)* are important virtues that facilitate salvation. Meditation means to disengage and withdraw one's mind when it is absorbed in interaction with the external world or when it seeks sleep or when it becomes lazy or lethargic. In other words, meditation means to keep one's mind focussed and concentrated within and not to let it wander away in any direction indulging in all types of worldly, material distractions.

The goal of meditation is to know and learn about the inherent, internal spiritual truths. This knowledge gained through the revelations of the hidden, inner spiritual truths is called '*pragna*' or Truth bearing knowledge, without which it is impossible to penetrate the darkness of human ignorance. This ignorance first conceals the spiritual truths, twists and distorts them and then reveals them in strange, distorted, disfigured forms. Finally, this ignorance transforms the pain-giving unpleasant objects into comfort-giving pleasant objects. This is called "false knowledge" or "false understanding", which misleads an individual to create all the pains and sufferings in the material world.

When an individual consolidates and concentrates his mind, disengages and withdraws from the external, material world, reduces and controls his sleeping habits, sits in the upright posture in isolation, and seeks the inner spiritual truths through meditation, he will definitely be able to realise all the inner truths. This type of meditational practice cannot and does not yield the desired fruits in a few days, and requires persistent efforts for a long time.

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DAY 4

With earnest and persistent efforts to withdraw himself from the worldly objects and engagements and by severing all his mundane ties and attachments, one day the individual will comprehend the complete oneness of his own soul (*atma*) with the universal soul (*paramatma*), and thereby, he will attain within himself the ultimate, divine bliss for ever. This divine bliss is the resultant spiritual blessing granted jointly and unitedly by the truth-seeking meditation *(dhyana)* and the truth-bearing knowledge *(pragna)*, in conjunction with the rest of the eight divine powers or virtues.

All the living beings of the world are in search of their spiritual moorings and divine heritage. It is only when a living being attains the form and status of a human being that he/she acquires the capacity to seek and reach his/her spiritual destination. One becomes vaguely conscious that one has been 'created' and granted the corporeal, physical body of a human being with a specific mission (to realise one's spiritual destination). But one's physical body which cannot last forever, dies and is again created, and this cycle of birth-death-birth-death continues till the human soul *(atma)* merges with the universal soul (*paramatma*) to attain the Spiritiual Bliss. The potent ignorance *(avidya)* entices the human being *(jiva)* in its clutches by offering ephemeral comforts and conceals as well as camouflages the spiritual bliss and obstructs his pursuit by putting a veil, which a seeker has to pierce and shed. The seeker thus, acquiring the eternal divine knowledge and eternal divine bliss will be able to quit the cycle of birth-death-birth-death, and attain the ultimate spiritual abode.

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DAY 5

A person's life is considered successful only when he achieves ever-abiding inner happiness and spiritual bliss, which saints of yore called '*moksh ka anand*', i.e. the bliss or ecstasy experienced in salvation. The word 'liberation' here connotes 'emancipation' or 'freedom' from material and mundane fetters (*bandhan*), which bind a person's mind right from his birth and which gradually get stronger in the form of habits and addictions as he ages. The human mind develops strong attraction and attachments which bring physical comforts and material happiness, called fetters of attachment (*raga bandhan)*. In a similar way one develops fetters of aversion (*dwesha bandhan*) when one's mind feels repulsion from objects and persons that bring pain and suffering. Instead of being entangled in both these fetters, one should strive to absolve oneself from them.

Universal material nature *(maya)* is the most potent force which creates the whole universe, which sustains it, and finally which destroys and demolishes it. It is in fact God's 'divine dynamism' *(maya)* and He is always aware of and has control over all its activities, through His omnipotent divine power and omniscient divine consciousness. It is only through His will that the divine dynamism *(maya)*, manifests itself in different forms and shapes all the while. If God, the Controller, withdraws His powers conferred on divine-dynamism (*maya*), it automatically ceases to exist. Thus the very existence of universal material nature *(prakriti)* depends on the mercy and goodwill of God.

When an individual undertakes to execute some deed or action as a matter of habit (habitual action), it denotes conative force (divine dynamism or *maya*). But when he first analyses the situation thoroughly and then consciously translates the knowledge through his response, it represents cognitive force (divine knowledge).

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DAY 6

The human mind is fettered and hence it is an easy prey to its surmountable worldly worries. For overcoming them the best and surest solution is to concentrate and consolidate his mind within himself which is so much scattered in and entangled with the external mundane world. One should purify, develop and enhance divine knowledge and restore, replenish and revitalise the body with vital force (*prana*), so that even in the present life-span one may experience one's inner divine bliss during one's waking hours. One will at once experience the revival of one's divine knowledge and the complete removal of one's ignorance. One will also realize, thereafter, that the vital element within one's body, one's soul (consciousness) is a part of cosmological consciousness which is all pervading and omnipresent in the whole universe.

It may be noted with significance, that among all living creatures it is only in human beings that the consciousness is in a fully developed form and the intellect more advanced. Also their consciousness has both intelligence (problem solving ability) and intellect (power of discrimination) which enable human beings to acquire the power and wherewithal to sever and demolish their fetters.

Any disturbance in the vital force *(prana)* has a corresponding adverse effect on the functions of the body system of an individual and results in various ailments, some of which may prove life-threatening. Thus it is evident that all the diseases are generally generated by the scattered and disintegrated mind and its collateral, scattered and fractured vital force *(prana)*. If a person, through regular and persistent efforts gets emancipation from the ten well known fetters, and if he can consolidate and concentrate his mind within himself, he will become immune from the physical and mental maladies.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

4. Worldly Fetters : Attachment/Affection/Love *(Raga)*

A person develops attachment, or love, or affection for persons or objects that provide worldly pleasure. The mind remains engrossed in them and their memory keeps haunting him. This is attachment *(raga)*, and it creates a recurrent desire in the person to have association with those persons and objects in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. As long as this desire is not satiated, the fire of attachment keeps burning and he can not experience the infinite and true knowledge of the self that lies dormant within him. If this attachment is fulfilled even for a while, and if it provides some pleasure, it gives rise to new desires and its force is more intensified than before so that its non-fulfilment gives greater pain. Thus, the more a person experiences the pleasure of attachment, the more it becomes the cause of severe ailments, and it does not give much pleasure. So one can see that the increased attachment makes the human life very miserable. The domain of this fetter is very large and is extended to many areas; in various sensual pleasures, field of authority, or fame and its like. A person is always absorbed in thoughts of the worldly pleasures that appear pleasant though their ephemeral happiness is unreal and and stressful.

This fetter of attachment *(raga)* can be weakened and destroyed only through dispassion and by attaining the eternal bliss of liberation. This dispassion, i.e. developing a tendency contrary to attachment, arises through right knowledge developed through reflection and meditation. One thus recognizes the real nature of the objects and persons outwardly appearing pleasurable, sweet, tempting, captivating and fascinating, and develops at once a dispassion for their temptation. Thus, one must awaken right knowledge through deep thinking and meditation in right posture to develop dispassion to get complete freedom from this fetter.

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DAY 8

One should first understand how human nature (or habitual ways) affects and how it controls human behaviour and life. In the beginning, these habitual ways (the path of least resistance) offer some comforts. These comforts produce worldly fetters which entice the human mind. The individual thus develops an attraction which soon gets converted into attachment for the mundane comforts. He pursues and ruminates about these comforts and thus develops a strong desire to possess them. This strong desire, soon overpowers him and goads him as per its dictates. This process which starts from childhood continues throughout one's life and transforms into a habit, governing his dealings. At this juncture, one needs to be reminded that God, the Almighty is the supreme power who rules over the whole universe. To control and regulate human behaviour, God plays His role through His representative intellect (*buddhi*) present within every individual to monitor the irresistible habits and He wants him to depend on his intellect rather than on his useless habits. This fact is explicitly and repeatedly explained by Lord Krishna in the Gita. When an individual is guided by an alert intellect he is considered to have divine knowledge, which correctly guides, which regulates and which protects him in his day to day life. The Universal Consciousness is the repository of this divine knowledge, which in its turn emancipates the individuals from the worldly fetters. The divine knowledge gets stabilized when the individual becomes alert and aware of the fact that the habitual ways, though tempting, are not going to prove helpful and beneficial in the end. One then realises the camouflaged reality of the irresistible habits which enslave, disable and incapacitate one.

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DAY 9

The religious way of life requires a person to examine his own inner self or to become '*atmadarshi*', i.e. he should augment and practise 'introspection'. This is considered to be the first step towards meditation when one sits in solitude and examines one's doings, viewing, listening, thoughts etc. One has to first develop one's intellectual power, i.e. the ability to differentiate and separate right from wrong, to examine and understand each separately in a judicious, skilful and balanced manner. At this point, the right knowledge (*vivek*) which is possessed only by the human species among all living beings, comes as a great asset. Thus, keeping full and complete faith and trust in God (the repository of all *vivek*), the individual should pursue his profession and his worldly chores, making honest efforts.

All the while a person must make sustained and sincere efforts to understand his 'inner-self' *(atma)* and to integrate it with *paramatma* (God). To lead a religious and spiritual life one should practise some introspection and perform all one's deeds accordingly, thus ridding oneself of fetters. Thus, through mindful consciousness, one will become courageous and powerful against the odds of one's irresistible and compulsive habitual ways and get rid of them.

Right faith *(dharma)* in essence is that principle which an individual or society has accepted willingly to lead a life in the world. It needs great effort and courage, as its tenets are not easy and convenient to practise, and as they need constant cultivation. In contrast, nature *(prakriti)* makes life flow, automatically, without any conscious effort, as a by-product of natural instincts and impulsive urges, and these forces control life in the whole universe. However, when one practises austerity, one gains strength gradually leading to meditation and ultimate realisation of inner divine knowledge, annihilating natural instinctive (animalistic) urges. This saturation of the mind with spirituality is liberation *(moksha)*.

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DAY 10

That the human mind can never remain idle (vacant) is a known fact. The habitual mind or nature (the compulsive instinctive urges) is limitless, beyond annihilation and with continuous vibrations. Opposed to this nature *(prakriti)* is the adoption of a austerity chosen by one's own free will. With the passage of time with persistent practice one acquires right knowledge and automatically thwarts the attacks of the compulsive instinctive urges of one's mind. Such is the power of austerity if constantly practised.

The first step in the religious way of life is to practise renunciation or to give up irresistible desires and insatiable worldly passions (*trishna*), through the acquisition of divine knowledge. One should possess only as many material objects as are essential for continuing his physical existence and for maintaining life, simultaneously cultivating the ten divine powers, to seek one's goal. Being mentally contented, detached, tolerant, renunciate, equanimous and tranquil, one strengthens his mind and fortifies one's meditation practice to attain spiritual salvation (*moksha/mukti*).

There are various stages in the practice of meditation. In the beginning with conscious efforts, one should loudly chant some 'holy name' or 'mantra' and concentrate one's mind only on that repetition of 'naam' or 'mantra'. Gradually, the mind gets fully interested and involved in meditation (self-absorbing meditation). When one fully understands the meaning of the token word or mantra, and when one enjoys its repetition it is called 'meaningful meditation'. At this ladder step, the mind will be disengaged from the external world. This achievement of meditational ecstasy should not be allowed to awaken one's self-pride or ego, and one has to be heedful. Finally renouncing self-pride and pursuing the path dexterously one ascends to the last ring of the ladder of meditation, the self-effacing, purified and crystalised one, which enables one to realise his ultimate destination, the supreme eternal spiritual bliss of the Lord.

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DAY 11

The more one thinks about the external world, the more one gets attached and emotionally involved and the more one hankers after the external world. A person goes on suffering physically and mentally in the hot pursuit of worldly engagements and entanglements. The individual develops liking, love and attachment *(raga)* for the material comforts of the world and develops a craving attitude and emotional attachment to them. A common person is thus taken over by the tricky and deceptive ways of universal nature *(prakriti)* unknowingly as these acts are performed without his awareness. One should strive to cultivate, bit by bit, in oneself the divine qualities of God, through the adoption of the religious life, to acquire the divine knowledge. This amounts to true, sincere and dedicated worship of God.

It may be again stressed here that out of all the living beings in the world only human beings are capable of having that divine knowledge, which enables him to recognise and evaluate the true worth of everything. The comforts provided by the material objects of the world are limited and ephemeral and ultimately end in suffering. Thus, one should strive to identify and achieve that true happiness which will not finally land one in pain and suffering, and this should become the main goal of one's meditation.

Bypassing the happenings of the external world, the individual should withdraw into himself to recognise the inner spiritual reality, which alone is competent to subjugate his temptations. The two main fetters *raga* (attraction towards pleasure-giving objects or persons) and *dwesha* (aversion from painful objects or persons) keep one's mind hooked to the external world. The person who is aware of these two types of relations with the external world, and also strives to acquire divine knowledge through worshiping God, by action and practice of spiritual meditation is a *jnana yogi*.

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DAY 12

Dedication to the pursuit of right conduct *(karmayoga)* will also enhance one's ability to pursue and practise spiritual meditation *(dhyanayoga)*. As a result, one will become aware and able to realise one's inner spirituality as well as to know and realise the divine knowledge. After gradually getting rid of all the worldly fetters, such a dedicated seeker and committed devotee of God, will experience, achieve and realize in himself the supreme divine bliss and spiritual peace.

One must, therefore, first strive to check the forces of universal nature *(prakriti)* which are pushing one towards unwanted pain and sufferings. From this very crucial point begins the awakening and heedfulness in the mind of an individual. With the help of meditation, he should awaken his right knowledge. One should also make the best use of his spiritual impressions *(sanskaras)* stored in his mind. Through constant mental analysis of his life situations and worldly experiences, he should always pursue the goal of awakening and acquiring the divine knowledge and spiritual consciousness to monitor his passage of existence.

The universal nature or divine dynamism *(maya)*, wielding the powerful wand of three-pronged inherent propensities (*sattwa, rajas and tamas*) coupled with the insatiable worldly passions *(trishna)* has been goading and directing all the living beings of the world right from their childhood. It is only the Almighty God, who has powers over universal nature *(prakriti)* and its mysterious machinations. With sincere dedication and intense devotion, when the individual cultivates and when he acquires in himself all the merits of God viz. His spiritual knowledge *(jnana)*, all powerful spiritual energy *(veerya)*, it amounts to a passionate prayer. All the while, *prakriti* will keep trying to obstruct the seeker's efforts of seeking these virtues alongwith dispassion *(vairagya)* and contentment *(santosh)*, but the individual has to overcome *prakriti*, anyhow.

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DAY 13

One witnesses a constant battle like that of the Mahabharata, continuously raging in his mind between the compulsive, blind and instinctive forces (universal nature) and the mindful, spiritual forces (divine consciousness). The individual, thereupon must constantly make efforts to awaken his personal intellectual capabilities *(punda)* to act like a 'Pundit' in the real sense to be a winner in this war. Through mental discipline *(manoyoga)* as an aid, one should cultivate and develop in his mind the discriminating power of right knowledge *(viveka)*.

When one's mind is calm and peaceful it will entertain and cultivate good, positive and peaceful ideas and thoughts, which all amounts to meditation *(dhyana)*. In Sanskrit language, etymologically, the word '*dhyana*' originated from the root *'Dhiya'*, which means remembering and thinking *(smaran and chintan)*. Though both '*dhyana*' and *chintan*' denote a thinking process, there is a subtle difference in their connotation and use—when one's mind is engaged in futile, useless, purposeless, random thoughts under the spell of one's personal nature or habitual tendencies (*swabhav*) it is called '*chintan*' and represents the word '*chit*' (sub conscious mind). However, when one's mind is cultivating and engaged in useful, purposeful, meaningful and positive thoughts, and when it intentionally, with efforts and due understanding, reinforces them with loud repetitions and rectitations, this is known as '*dhyana*' or meditation. *Dhyana* specifically involves the repetition of a token symbolic word, representing a certain thought and its full content and connotation (meaning) for general 'well being' or '*kalyana*'.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

5. Worldly Fetters : Aversion *(Dwesha)*

Aversion is the opposite of attachment. When a person experiences pain from an object, his mind seeks to turn away from it so that he may avoid association with it forever. The object of aversion continues to haunt his mind and entangles it just like the object of attachment. The desire to acquire the object of attachment and repel the object of aversion always keeps the mind pre-occupied. This is in fact the fetter of wrong viewing or perception and gives rise to the fetters of aversion like anger, envy, hatred.

Friendly attitude is a powerful antidote to aversion. The power of forgiveness is also important and effective. Besides, some forms of renunciation of self-interest also help in getting freedom from it. A person must free himself from the fetter of attachment to attain freedom from aversion because attachment is there only for a pleasure-giving object, and aversion or anger arises in a person's mind when his pleasure is obstructed. Aversion will have no place in life if the pleasure of attachment is renounced, if pain is endured by treating it as an austerity; if conceit or egoism is not permitted and if the power of forgiveness is maintained. The path of liberation then becomes smooth through freedom from aversion.

No wrong tendency deeply rooted in the mind can be destroyed just by listening to the scriptures. Its impressions are very strong. A person must deeply meditate for long on the impressions of right knowledge. Moreover, the meditated impressions become steady and mature. When the mind awakens in solitude and when the intellect becomes steady in itself, these will destroy attachment as well as aversion, and will bring happiness. Also, one must be careful in one's pursuit, as sloth or sleep may intervene by offering its pleasure during meditation and deprive one of the true happiness (bliss) of liberation.

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DAY 14 *(2nd Weekend) continued...*
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life.

(14)

No anticipation, no hope in someone keep,
Enjoy then love of all, no evil in it creep;
Go deep into your heart to search for fine evil,
Spoil which hid bliss of soul, don't hesitate to kill.

(15)

Reason is on your side, go into its refuge,
The more you store, the more to deplore it confuse;
Contented eat, be what; body be sustained well,
With matters perplexed mind wish all turns out it hell.

(16)

Live one with wise faith for good and right to perform,
In pains with energy, mindful for one's reform;
For inward satisfaction, silent habitual mind,
Go deep in meditation for saviour truth to find.

(17)

One being in one's full strength may run after all fad,
And take licence for joy sensual all good and bad;
And then for intellectual satisfaction make all fool,
Hold doctrine of 'Nature' which shows all beings its tool.

(18)

A man as a rational being for benefit much prevent,
For well-being go through pains in spite of Nature's bent;
Men do differently act with reason weak and strong,
One make an example of a one who least does wrong.

(19)

The 'Nature' mostly moves showing its pleasures or pains,
One's innate tendency to obey yet sustains;
With reason fortified if be one with strong 'will',
And, not be moved with pains throws off its bondage ill.

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DAY 15

If one starts reflecting and scrutinizing within one's mind as to what constitutes lust, anger, attachment, aversion, pride, delusion, envy, jealousy, and ignorance and if simultaneously develops a keen interest in meditation, one soon reaches the stage of absorbed meditation *(samadhi)*, so much so that one becomes completely oblivious of the external world. However, at this juncture, one must be very cautious, because these flashes do not mean that one has successfully and completely severed one's ties with the external world, for one may revert back to that world, if one's meditation stops even for a moment. One needs to persist and fortify further one's meditation to that end. Gradually, when after constant efforts one's mind is emancipated of its involvement with the external world, his mind (*elan-vital*, active in the form of essential breath, *prana* in one's body), will also get consolidated and concentrated in one, and one will enjoy the same freshness and rejuvenation during both one's sleep and wakeful state. So one's aim should be to consolidate these two great forces, avoiding natural, habitual inclinations and tendencies, born out of ignorance *(avidya)*, which normally controls one's life. It is always wise to recognize these subversive urges in early stages and uproot them completely, with the help of meditation to experience the real peace of mind, the celestial ecstasy and divine bliss. Such an elevated state is experienced only by the sincere and selfless seekers, who lead their lives according to religious and ethical principles and not by natural, habitual tendencies and impulsive urges. One who attains this state, lives a noble, detached life without the blemishes and weaknesses of the physical, corporeal, material bodies, like the existence of angels. One enjoys a peaceful, dispassionate and sublime, heavenly existence in the sphere of meditation *(dhyana loka)* submerged in eternal divine bliss.

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DAY 16

One should, therefore, develop one's spiritual knowledge through the practice of meditation. Generating a noble, affectionate, humanly sympathetic attitude towards all the living beings of the world is a helpful tool. One must give up his natural, habitual, mundane, evil inclinations and tendencies such as lust, anger, greed, attachment, aggrandizement, jealousy and ill-will. Instead one should nurture the sacred sentiments, associated with and attributed to God. Godly qualities constitute friendliness and brotherhood, sympathy and kindness, appreciation and encouragement, humility, politeness, forgiveness, tolerance, sharing, charity, contentment, satisfaction and deliberate ignoring and disregarding others' weaknesses. This mental achievement is called : 'becoming conscious in one's solitude'. Consciousness implies "without any worldly fetters *(bandhan)"*, and is a pre-requisite for spiritual deliverance *(mukti)*. One should, therefore, get rid of all the mundane, evil and negative propensities of his mind, willingly, consciously, without any hesitation and resistance, after fully understanding and grasping their evil implications and effects to liberate oneself from all the mental fetters.

One cannot develop devotion and dedication towards God without spiritual knowledge and without developing endurance of suffering, pain and discomfort experienced during the practice of spiritual discipline. Life is like a pilgrimage *(teerthyatra)* to reach His abode of bliss *(anand- dhaam)*. In other words *'Teerath'* means 'to swim' and the word *'yatra'* means journey. Thus *'teerath yatra'* figuratively implies to perform the journey and swim across the ocean of existence in search of God to achieve liberation *(moksha)*.

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DAY 17

Wherever the human mind goes, the life energy *(prana)* follows it and starts flowing in that direction. One must have noticed that when one sits without any concern or worry, one's life-energy and breathing are very peaceful and normal. It is so because one's mind is free from the entanglements of the external world and is quiet and tranquil. On the other hand, both of these forces get disturbed when one's mind gets involved in the machinations of the external world.

All the deeds (actions and reactions) repeatedly performed by a person (such as his relationships and ties with other persons and material objects and worldly possessions) as well as deeds the person had performed in previous lives and their accumulated awards which exist and persist in the mind as impressions *(sanskaras)* constitute personal nature *(prakriti)* or the force of habit of a person, which enslaves and binds a person strongly with the external world. This enticement to the material comforts is called the fetter of attachment (*raga-bandhan*) and the constant brooding over it is called false meditation *(mithya-dhyana)* i.e. enslaved consciousness. Also, when one's mind is fixated on the worldly comforts he enjoyed in the past, it is called 'fixated attitude' leading to 'mental distraction' which involves pre-occupations of material world and which is false meditation. Overcoming all these obstacles one must practise the uplifting meditation to reach one's goal. One has to practise this meditation by mutely repeating a sacred pious token word (*mantra*) in one's mind as well as to keep eliminating thoughts of the ephemeral vain glory of the worldly comforts. This pre-supposes that one has taken steps to ignite and awaken one's indiscreet slumbering mind and latent spiritual knowledge therein, through '*vivek*' i.e. right knowledge, to light the flame in order to dispel the prevailing darkness.

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DAY 18

During the process of uplifting meditation one has to face and tolerate some inconvenience and discomfort. When one willingly accepts these discomforts of meditation and introspection in the pursuit of spiritual realisation and divine awakening, the process one treads is austerity *(tapasya)*. One should endure the suffering and inconvenience which arise during one's avoiding and discontinuing one's addiction to material comforts of the world, and the gratification of his habitual demands flowing from one's compulsive personal nature, maintaining one's intellectual balance without negativity.

One needs to be reminded at this juncture that the most important thing worth realising and experiencing in life is God (supreme consciousness) who is present everywhere (omnipresent), who is dwelling inside every living being in the form of consciousness (soul or spirit) and who never dies (immortal). Everything else is temporary, mortal and ultimately brings pain and suffering. That the comforts and happiness provided by the mundane objects do not last for ever is an eternal truth to be always remembered, even in meditation and while sleeping. One needs to ruminate this reality while sitting awake and alert, without speech or thought, with a mind, devoid of worldly entanglements. This state is called absorbed meditation *(smadhi)*, which indicates that the seeker's mind is completely concentrated on and consolidated in the eternal truth, known as all-pervading Consciousness or God. During *samadhi*, one becomes completely oblivious of the external world, with all one's senses inactive and withdrawn as in deep sleep.

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DAY 19

When one completely gives up one's selfish, worldly pre-occupations, and external activities, when one has grasped and when one has understood the futility of emotional relations, when one has achieved complete freedom from one's worldly fetters, when one has no attachment and aversion, lust and greed, pride or prejudice, love or hatred, etc., only then he experiences spiritual salvation *(mukti)*. Then one also knows that there is no need to be afraid of the mundane world which one's mind had hitherto conjured, which it had created, which it had confabulated, which it had comprehended and which it had understood in the light of personal and social interactions.

God, in the form of consciousness, is present everywhere and in every living person, and is manifesting Himself, every moment in different new forms, according to the time and situation. Therefore, when one witnesses some emotional experience in social encounters, one should at once understand that all the emotional drama is enacted by the omniscient God. In the social encounter when one's mind gets into the influence of wrong tendencies like attachment, aversion, lust, anger etc. one should insulate one's mind against the impulses of these tendencies. One should direct one's mind to focus, study and access the pain and sufferings encountered in the pursuit of worldly, mundane activities. This focusing of mind is called concentration *(dhyana)*. Though, it appears difficult to withdraw, focus and concentrate the mind, with patience and persistence it is possible in spite of the mind's wanderlust and attachment to its impulses and natural tendencies, leading one to the external world. One has to accept the anguish of deprivation of the worldly pleasures one used to derive from material comforts and gratification of one's compulsive habits and impulsive tendencies. Tolerating the pain as well as the loss of extra sleep, as one walks steadily on the path, gradually one finds one's mind has become very calm, peaceful and serene and one has attained a state called spiritual deliverance from worldly bondage *(mukti)*.

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DAY 20

To diagnose and cure one's inner spiritual problems, one will have to go deep into the causative factors, extent and intensity of spread, and analyse them. Besides, one should delve deep in one's heart to realise the various factors governing one's spiritual problems and one's psychic energy. Simultaneously, one must keep on identifying one's spiritual forces and activating them. During this process this multi-prong approach makes one aware of the supreme spiritual power (God), the inner reality.

The mind is not aware of its own spiritual moorings— the spiritual power which sustains one's life—it remains all the time entangled with the external world, divided and scattered, dissipating its psychic energy. To comprehend spiritual bliss one has to study and understand the minutest detail of one's worldly fetters which conceal this spiritual bliss from one's mind, and to remove all layers of ignorance which shroud and hide it.

To acquire right knowledge one may follow any of the two methods. In the first method one has to let God reveal knowledge spiritually, while in the second one has to seek it with the help of one's mind which never sits idle. However, when there is neither spiritual revelation, nor when the mind gets knowledge through any external sources and when it remains in a moribund state, ignorance takes over and propels the mind to loiter and wander in the external world to acquire some information and knowledge, obtaining which the mind feels that it has gained its existence. The fact remains that ignorance cannot in any way conceal the all-pervading supreme spiritual power. God reveals knowledge spiritually to the minutest detail through sudden and unexpected revelation like a flash of lightning.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

6. Worldly Fetters: Love of Forms *(rupa-raga)*

The fetter of attachment to passions related to the sphere of desire or passion, where a person indulges in many kinds of activities to fulfil his desires and wishes to enjoy their pleasures, always keeping the objects of pleasure in his mind and thoughts was elucidated earlier. But there is also the fetter of attachment to forms (*rupa-raga*). A meditator may get freedom from entanglement in the sphere of desires when he develops dispassion by awakening right knowledge through sitting in meditation and when he turns his mind away from the desires considering them as trifles and the cause of miseries, but he, not attaining steadiness of the right knowledge as soul will seek refuge somewhere to make his mind steady. It means that even when his mind is free from desires, it will not like to forget the world. He would naturally be drawn to objects like sound etc. through his eyes, ears etc. and like a child will find pleasure in them. This is the love of forms. Even when a seeker spends his time in meditation in solitude, he thinks of the solidity of earth, the softness of water, the heat of fire and the soft touch of air only and finds pleasure in their thoughts and dwells in them.

Love of forms means loving the objects suiting one's sense organs, and is a strong fetter. Man experiences his body with the support of these sense organs just as a person who loves his body does not like to renounce it. In order to attain liberation the meditator has to develop dispassion for this hearing, touching and seeing etc. and has to make a lot of right efforts to proceed further in the formless sphere to discover the path of liberation. The love of solitude is most essential for this purpose.

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DAY 22

That 'Knowledge leads to action' is a basic principle to be examined and understood by every human mind. In other words, one must acknowledge the truth that theoretical knowledge must be followed by practical wisdom. To the extent the mind gets emancipated from its entanglements and involvements in the external world, to the same extent the human body will be released from all the physical and mental diseases and disabilities. Also, the free and unrestricted knowledge leads to free and unrestricted action which every person should practise in his life.

When a human being disengages his mind from worldly involvements and sits in meditation with a peaceful mind, he will come face to face with many different inner realities. But this has two pre-conditions; the first being withdrawal of mental interaction with the external world, and the second is the shedding the mental sloth, lethargy and sleep induced by ignorance. His mind should be finely tuned to such an extent that he is able to endure the pain inflicted by these two barricades. Also, it is imperative that one should discover all one's inner spiritual truths in totality and also in the minutest detail and not in a casual or superficial manner, dispelling sleep and shrouds of ignorance. To uproot ignorance, which is very powerful and which forces a person to remain entrapped in the external world, strenuous and persistent efforts during the wakeful stage or while asleep are required. The realization of the inner spiritual truths is the be-all and end-all of one's earthly existence.

To extricate one's mind from the external world requires a gradual strengthening of it by oneself to endure the suffering it will experience in the process. This is necessary as when the mind experiences some suffering in its detachment from the material comforts of the external world, it quickly reverts and slips back into the external world. Gradually , when a person starts enduring the suffering, with the help of meditation and a high degree of patience, he will achieve his desired goal and his mind will face events as an observer and not as a participant.

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DAY 23

God will manifest Himself to the seeker in the form of feeling or sensibility. He does not possess a physical form, but God has emotive dimensions. One must be patient during one's sufferings, waiting and watching as to how long one can stand them. One will realise that it is the divine power (God) which enables a person to hold on against suffering, and which also makes him aware of his suffering and becoming upset. The fact is that the suffering is nothing but one's impatience to know and possess the mundane objects of the world (which gratifies one's habitual comforts), and so one should endure that suffering. Likewise, all one's other mental fetters are creations of one's own mind.

One cannot benefit from the revelations and reports of other persons, one has to be alert and awaken his mind through his personal efforts and experience. One may do it by loudly repeating such words, "The eating of that particular food is not beneficial for me." One should repeat the warnings to such an extent that one's mind actually starts absorbing the meaning of the spoken words. One should meditate on the meanings of the word, first by loud repetition and later one should meditate silently, quietly, without loud repetition. This stage of meditation is called "absorbed meditation of spiritual knowledge". During this stage, the seeker's mind completely withdraws itself from the external world, becomes oblivious of it and thus automatically is driven to inner peace, with his soul or inner self (the repository of knowledge) becoming the spiritual observer of the inner peace.

When the spiritual observer starts asserting and manifesting itself, then automatically one's ignorance will start dissolving and disappearing and supreme consciousness (God) will reveal Itself. During this stage, one's mind forgets all its mental fetters, is freed of mundane attractions and enjoys spiritual peace and divine bliss within it, in its fully wakeful state, and cherishes the permanence of this experience.

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DAY 24

One should utilize one's spare time in mindful breathing, that is, constantly watching one's breathing in (inhalation) and breathing out (exhalation). One should sit in solitude peacefully, for meditation, after sparing time for digestion of food. If he can still spare time, he should start analysing the cause of his sufferings and troubles, if there are any. With the initiation of this practice of self-analysis, one will develop some self-understanding and grasp the causes of one's sufferings. This stage indicates that one has successfully cultivated and developed the higher mental faculty of insight, and wisdom. Now, one does not need an experienced and wise person to guide one and one may get along with one's learnings from one's self-analysis. Thus one should go on practising introspection and nurturing insight. However, all the while one should be watchful that one's actions and resolutions do not harm others, and at the same time guard against one's own plans of promoting personal, selfish gains and interests through constant vigil.

It is essential that one should tolerate the inconveniences and sufferings caused by giving up one's personal and selfish gains and interests. If one is able to tolerate the inconvenience and sufferings and if one continues sitting in an erect yogic posture (keeping one's spinal cord straight) in solitude, fully awake, and if one continues one's meditation, gradually increasing the time from a few minutes (3 mts.) to a few hours (3hrs.), God will start creating in one, the feeling of comfort, peace and bliss and ultimately spiritual realities and divine knowledge.

'To be alert' means to be conscious. 'To be constantly and continuously alert' implies that one is going to gain strength and energy every moment. Here, strength refers to 'mental strength' in order to endure all types of sufferings and anguish caused by deprivation or non-gratification of worldly pleasures. Also through 'endurance' one should pacify one's mind when upset, shunning negativity.

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DAY 25

Unless one trains one's mind and intellect and unless one develops one's inner, spiritual power to realise mental peace, one can not remain concentrated and consolidated within oneself. Thus, it is essential to develop the habit of sitting in solitude and practise meditation, in order to achieve emancipation from the entanglements of the external world. The best way to develop the practice of meditation is by learning to endure the pain and suffering produced by the non-gratification and non-indulgence in one's habitual and daily material comforts. Meditation will develop insight in one's inner spiritual realities and will help one to realise one's divine peace and spiritual bliss. Thereafter, one needs to recite only such words which one has understood well through one's meditation, instead of one's habitual daily prayers.

It is one's earnest persistent motivation which can help one to know one's own divine self. The vast and wide external material world can not provide him enough knowledge. The required spiritual knowledge lies in abundance within oneself and not outside in the external world. However, this inner spiritual knowledge can only be realized when one's inner divine eye opens, implying the shedding the veil of ignorance preventing spiritual awareness. For this purpose one has to pass through the portals of suffering and pain.

Universal nature generates some hardships and thereby reminds the human being of the comforts of the mundane external world and pushes him there for their acquisition, developing ignorance of the inner spiritual self, and promoting the worldly fetters of attachment, aversion etc., as a consequence. It is possible to comprehend how the universal nature enforces its regimen, because all this drama is happening inside, if only one is able to activate one's inner spiritual eye.

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DAY 26

To activate one's inner spiritual eye, one should cultivate the habit of sitting in solitude in order to counsel, guide and direct one's mind keeping a positive attitude towards the hardships one experiences therein. One will then automatically start understanding the implications of such hardships and their root cause, in the form of insatiable worldly passions *(trishna)* which will become very evident and visible. As the meditation progresses, one gains more insight into inner spiritual truths and is consequently delivered of the pain and sufferings and he starts experiencing eternal spiritual peace.

Thus, it is evident that if one wants to possess the divine knowledge within oneself to enjoy the everlasting spiritual bliss of one's soul, one's mind should be completely free from the entanglements of the external world. There are five important factors to achieve this freedom; right religious confidence *(shraddha)*, energy *(veerya)*, mindfulness *(smriti)*, absorbed meditation with serenity *(samadhi)* and supreme intelligence or truth bearing knowledge *(pragna)*. But along with these five ingredients for the realisation of salvation, there is a need to willingly accept and develop endurance for the hardships which are faced on this path of spiritual regeneration. Thus one will definitely develop insight into one's inner spiritual truth with one's own persistent efforts, finding one's own solutions for all one's doubts and misgivings. Simultaneously, one must adopt and practise the best, the most desirable, congenial behavior, shunning all negativity. One should always be cautious not to succumb to the pulls and pushes of the compulsive habits and demands of universal nature. If one practises meditation in this manner, gradually one will be protecting oneself from spiritual degeneration, and will without doubt achieve spiritual salvation, one's ultimate goal *(paramdham)*.

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DAY 27

The best and the most effective method of concentration and consolidation of mind is that which is not dependent on external supports and aids. In ancient Hindu religious books, this non-dependence on external supports and aids is referred as spiritual liberation *(mukti)* or freedom from worldly bondage *(moksha)*. So there stands a dire need for a seeker, to understand the role of fetters which obstruct his path leading to *moksha*, and which religious scholars have identified after detailed personal experience.

Normally, an idle mind without any engagement has the tendency to go to sleep or become lazy and lethargic. To overcome that one should recite silently some token words of incantation *(mantra)*, keeping the mind aware of their spiritual connotations and religious implications in his meditation, or at least the person should recite the name of any God of his choice and faith — *"nama japa" (japa-yoga)*. *Nama-japa* too aims at awakening of the soul, through concentration and the consolidation of the mind with the help of devoted recitation and repetition of the name of God and God who knows the seeker's fetters will grant liberation from them.

The full and complete realization of the goal and the purpose of devoted incantations and religious prayer implies that all the divine and spiritual merits of God should be realized in the human mind and thereafter all the mental garbage of worldly fetters must get completely wiped out to get the human mind sanctified and purified. In such a condition, completely stable in its size in its own serenity, the mind will experience within itself the spiritual bliss of the divine reality whose name the human being is devoutly reciting in his prayers and incantations of the divine name. Then the role of meditation will become really very subtle and sublime.

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DAY 28/29 *(2nd Long Weekend)*

7. Worldly Fetters:Love of Formless Sphere *(Aroop-raga)*

A person, who can absorb his mind in that vast and empty sphere escapes the attachment with forms but continues to be fettered by love of formless sphere. Finding pleasure in that alone, he won't attain salvation of soul manifested as true knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to be free even from this fetter of the love of formless, which is extended to wide area. Suppose a person experiencing the very non-conscious nature of space, thinks that objects of the sense organs and the space constitute the infinite knowledge, he has only the knowledge of what he hears, or what he sees and of what he perceives through his sense organs and they do not have any separate existence. He regards the knowledge to be true and so regards objects as non-existing. But he gains that knowledge every moment. He keeps his mind absorbed in it and finds pleasure in contemplation of that infinite knowledge, and is indeed fettered by the love of formless sphere akin to the love of desires and the sphere of objects or love of forms. There is nothing in this sphere to be perceived by sense organs. Only the mind sees in itself the changing forms of knowledge and this sphere of infinite knowledge is the sphere of the formless.

Similarly, while acquiring knowledge, the mind attains great happiness, i.e. when the mind is at rest, the meditator doesn't want to understand by experiencing infinite and then being at perfect rest or peace just as an exhausted person in the world goes to sleep. But in this dark state, the meditator keeps awake through mindfulness. Thus being free from the fetter of desire for all kinds of knowledge, he attains happiness manifested as perfect peace and good. A man fettered by such happiness is also attached to love of formless sphere.

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DAY 28/29 (2nd Long Weekened) *Continued...*

A mind absorbed in this infinite knowledge is attached to the sphere of formless. It does not have the feeling of a state of emancipation and steadfastness in the soul. Therefore, this too is a fetter. Then, the mind attached to the sphere of love of formless experiences another sphere of formless while trying to transcend it. When the mind is at rest after moving in infinite knowledge, it is afraid of its annhilation as it is happily and peacefully absorbed in its dark state. The seeker experiences his existence through that knowledge. When he experiences a void of knowledge, he has a fear of self-destruction. Troubled by this fear and wanting to escape this destruction if a person seeks to know something or to acquire knowledge, that knowledge is the same as he tried to put him at complete rest and wanted to take him to the state of darkness in that state of complete rest. Thus, the mind fails to experience peace in either of these two states. Between these two, there is another state which is called knowledge *(sangna)* and non-knowledge *(asangna)*. Love of formless sphere is limited upto this point. After this, three fetters of delusion, vanity (ego) and spiritual ignorance are left and salvation can be attained on deliverance from them.

This love of formless sphere means that the meditator who is absorbed in solitude won't like to live in the community after renouncing all desires. But he can't live like a lifeless stone. So in such a state he will turn his mind to meditation and will come across various spheres in accordance with his efforts and the degree of dispassion. He is absorbed in his meditation while hearing, seeing and studying the vast field of life around him. A person who has a pure mind, is always mindful and conducts himself with mindfulness, experiences the same infinite knowledge in all human beings.

The pilgrims on the path of salvation can move forward only after freeing them from this fetter besides others.

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DAY 28/29 *(2nd Long Weekend) continued...*

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(20)

'One could not do, he should', don't bring to mind that ill,
Least find fault with a one, poor in power of will;
Ignore it, in practice seeing one had wished no wrong,
For you, praise his quality, don't listen to mind's singsong.

(21)

To look after they have their jobs thousand-and-one,
And bound with inner chains outward affairs they run;
In a huff, in sentiment they do act which brings pain,
Have compassion for them and joy if pleasure gain.

(22)

By that pacified in soul, in oneself one purified,
Not stared by empty mind, stays inwards well occupied;
Ill-will, anger and pride, show nature, being renounced,
In meditation, of men, which get them flounced and bounced.

(23)

Though separated from world, of it, yet all you know,
Affected by evils of it, but, never go;
Variously restless ones ceaselessly for which grace,
Do pine, that rest with you divine with fine solace.

(24)

Happy, if others go why your heart be with taint?
In your being gone thus ill no one's pleasure goes faint;
Enlarge your heart on seeing it, be cheerful and wise,
Quit jealousy, lose ill-will, vast bliss will be your prize.

(25)

How mind inside proceeds, for others in all deeds?
Does it pay noble heed or clash with them for needs;
Make one growing want a vile, it flows mere to beguile,
One goes glad, reconciled, feels friendliness worth-while.

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MARCH

Mindful Respiration

The breath plays an extremely important role in the proper functioning of the body and the mind. It is the life force *(prana shakti)* that supplies all the energy and vitality needed for us to lead a full life in every sense. Many of the physical and psychological disorders and diseases that we suffer are caused to a large extent by wrong breathing. In order to keep the body and mind intact and fit for meditation one should master the art of breathing consciously. Swamiji calls it Mindful Respiration *(pranapan smriti)*. First, one should learn to send positive prana to every part of the body by concentrating on each and every organ while inhaling and exhaling mindfully. This helps the body to become healthy and fit, free from physical stress and strain. Next, one should take away one's attention from the body and turn it towards the mind. One should breathe calmly, and simply keep watching the breath as it comes and goes. This helps to release the mind slowly from its various fetters. With repeated and continuous practice the distracted mind becomes more collected and concentrated. As the *prana shakti* begins to flow easily and unobstructed through the body and mind the person is able to stabilize his *asana* and begin to meditate.

Editor

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Day 1



MARCH

It is imperative that the human being must know and identify all the worldly fetters which tie him down and enslave his mind, so that whenever these worldly fetters manifest themselves during his religious recitations and prayers, his mind may, easily and at once, identify them and quickly get rid of them. All these wrong tendencies of the mind, the worldly fetters, remain hidden in the remote recesses of the human mind. There are two such hidden recesses of the mind; one the "unconscious mind" which is almost unfathomable and which is never completely known, second the "subconscious mind" or the semi-conscious or preconscious mind, which can be known with some effort.

There are three types of mental pre-occupations or worldly fetters. The first is attachment (*raga*), i.e. the mental craving for the object which once provided comfort and happiness and which the mind strongly desires to possess eternally. The second one is to destroy or to get rid of the object which is the source of pain and suffering, and is called aversion (dwesha). The third one is a typical mental occupation called delusion (*moha*). When one does not possess the object of his liking, or when one cannot get rid of a painful object, one's mind is occupied with thoughts of repentance, grief and fear all the time. Such a mental state is called delusion, i.e. it represents mental involvement with persistent and painful ideas, so much so that the person does not at all bother about the external realities and his social obligations, but that he continues suffering instead. Thus, in all these fetters the mind keeps ruminating and thinking all the time in great detail, even when a person is sleeping or when it is engaged in some work, and thus interacting with the external world. All these ignoble and negative feelings and reactions of the mind are called wrong tendencies *(vikars)*, the root cause which are buried deep in the unconscious mind and are called worldly fetters (*bandhan*).

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DAY 2

There is still another force, which gives birth to worldly fetters and which lies hidden in the still deeper and unfathomable recesses of the unconscious mind, which is called ignorance *(avidya)*, because of which a person remains engaged and enticed to the external world, to know more and more of it. The mind regards that by withdrawing and disengaging itself from the hustle of the external world it will get lost in the darkness of ignorance. Hence, the mind continues to engage itself with this mundane world to gather information and knowledge and the utility of objects and persons. When the mind fails in its essential function of knowing and understanding, it starts feeling deprived of its power, its existence and becomes a victim of impotence. Actually, it is ignorance which forces the mind to know more and more about the external world all the time, acting as a subtle but strong worldly fetter that starts distracting and unsettling the mind as one sits down for meditation.

Thus the four important worldly fetters are : spiritual ignorance, delusion, attachment and aversion. Because of these inherent worldly fetters, the usual mental tendency is to run towards the external world. Right from childhood, the mind makes all the senses completely outgoing and extroverted in every aspect in search of objects of material comforts in the world. All this represents the manifestation of the worldly fetter, lust (*kama*). Likewise, there is another fetter namely doubt, and one's mind never gets itself devoid of doubt (*sanshay*). This accrues, as the mind is ever involved in the predicament of assessing things and persons for their utility or otherwise depending solely on superficial knowledge, without introspection or looking within itself for assistance.

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DAY 3

A human being acquires his ego or self-pride with the help and means of the knowledge of the external world, which is a strong fetter. It starts with self-recognition that the person receives at a particular place and this self recognition incites the fetter of self-recognition. It grows expecting and demanding that as long as one lives, one must also receive self-recognition. When he does not receive it, he feels upset and emotionally disturbed. All this is called the fetter of self-love, self-recognition, respect *(maan)*, or the hunger of the ego for privilege and prestige.

It is not sufficient to read or hear only about these fetters or wrong tendencies *(vikars)* in order to understand them. For this purpose it is necessary to sit in solitude for some time and let the mind analyse and grasp the full meanings and implications of these fetters. When one's mind gets much disturbed and pained when it is denied the material comforts of the world, then one should make one's mind aware and alert with these words of warning : "Will these material comforts of the world last for the whole of your life ?" Then O mind ! "Why are you hankering after them ? Your precious life is passing so quickly. How will you manage when these worldly comforts are not available ?" In this manner, heeding such words of warning and grasping their intent, one should develop one's spiritual awareness. All this is called introspection and meditation, and with their help one is able to stabilize one's mind in spiritual awareness, cultivate spiritual knowledge and ultimate salvation.

For the realisation of spiritual knowledge, it is essential to learn and practise 'meditation'. The word 'meditation' means "to mentally study in depth a definite, particular thought or a topic." In other words, meditation involves complete withdrawal of the mind from the engagements and enticement of the external world, and instead to fully devote the mind in the study and analysis of a definite thought and topic.

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DAY 4

Meditation is an art and can only be mastered by continuous patient practice. One may start with the recitation of the name of God, like *Hare Rama* or *Jai Shiv,* or *Hari Om*, or a religious '*mantra*', given by a master or one chosen by oneself. When his mind becomes fully alert and active after establishing control over one's sleeping habits, and grasping the ill-effects of the fetters, one should focus on any thought or topic for inducing and practising meditation, even though one has given up the practice of loud repetitions and recitations of pious and religious words and the name of God of one's chosen faith and conviction.

All topics and thoughts of one's meditation will automatically lead one towards God because meditation will unravel and expose all the evil effects of fetters which conceal the spiritual bliss of God. Unless the seeker understands and unless he achieves divine knowledge, experiences and enjoys the spiritual bliss of God, his mind will always remain attracted towards the mundane comforts of the external world. His inherent ignorance will compel his mind to ruminate time and again about those mundane comforts through their preserved past impressions and attitudes towards them, but when his mind develops insight into their real worth, through regular mediation, he will soon develop more strength and resolve to achieve spiritual salvation.

Once this natural and spontaneous meditation is achieved, it cannot be disturbed and destroyed. To achieve perfection in meditation, one has to inculcate enough inner resolve to oppose fetters and cultivate divine merits to oppose moral weaknesses. One will have to cultivate the feelings of universal brotherhood and social fellowship for achieving common welfare and mutual happiness.

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DAY 5

For efficient meditation on the path, the seeker needs to gradually increase his capacity to sit in solitude and also to keep awake at night, so that he may become aware of his inherent weaknesses, as also develop strength and courage to overcome these weaknesses.

It is a well known fact that the irresistible and worldly passion always impels a person to behave rashly and irrationally. Insatiable worldly passions *(trishna)* always force a human being to get attracted, engaged, enticed, entangled and engulfed in the mundane world, and this is known as *bhav trishna* while death can be described as the "irresistible desire for non-activity and passivity", or in religious jargon it has been given the name *vibhav-trishna*. In order to get rid of these two types of irresistible desires, one should cultivate endurance towards all the mental agonies caused by the fetters and selfish fixations to realise both inner peace and happiness. One has also to restrain one's mind from rushing outwards to acquire material objects which provide physical comforts.

In essence the mind is enticed to the outside world because of one's (i) spiritual ignorance, (ii) hunger for social status and prestige, (iii) greed (iv) attachment (v) aversion, (vi) doubt, (vii) lack of consideration and sympathy, (viii) paucity of cogent conduct and congenial attitude, (ix) attraction for various, different forms and figures and, (x) obsession to possess those forms and figures. These ten fetters give birth to their progenies like desire, anger, lust, jealousy, fear, impatience etc. and need to be taken note of strictly, through constant vigil, prompt and severe action to demolish them, time and again, for a smooth and safe meditation leading to the ultimate salvation of the seeker.

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DAY 6

While one treads the path, one will have to simultaneously live in harmony and peace with one's social environs. For this end, one will have to be extra-careful and cautious in his social dealings and interactions with other people. If the person fails in his social responsibilities owing to lack of brotherly and friendly feelings for others, his social life will be severely affected.The universal divine consciousness, which is all pervading and uniformly present throughout the sentinent existence in a most organized manner, is called Almighty God. Therefore, it is essential to have harmonious, affectionate and fraternal relationship with the world created by Almighty God. A solitary, single being has no life. Life has its meaning and value when one cultivates and maintains healthy and harmonious relations with other beings in the universe.

Thus, the most organised and well-knit universe of mutually dependent relations represents Almighty, God. A single solitary being has no significance or value without the 'collective whole', the Almighty, God. The single, solitary human being represents one spark of divine life in the physical body and the total, full, divine whole is Almighty God. All the human beings are attached to each other in a well-knit, mutually dependent world. This colossal, well organised, well-knit world personifies the Almighty Lord.

Various spiritual authorities have described Almighty God in their own manner accoding to their personal convictions. The famous saint Ramanuja has described God as a well knit, fully integrated, unique, supreme being. Another great Acharya Vallabhacharya also says that God is overall supreme power. He elaborates that He constitutes the amalgam of all the powers of the universe and He is the only one power with none else like Him.

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DAY 7 *(1st Weekend)*

8. Worldly Fetters: Delusion *(moha):*

The mind absorbed in pleasures provided by worldly persons and objects doesn't want to forget them, and feels pain and doubt in renouncing them. All this is the manifestation of delusion, a strong fetter. If a person acquires freedom from this state of delusion, the true inner self will manifest itself as bliss. A man lost in this delusion is worried about the separation from the worldly objects and persons. In such a state, experiencing the pleasure of these objects and the pain of their insatiable passion, a person must overcome his sloth and sleep and awaken his right knowledge. Sitting in meditation, realize the triviality of this delusion and learn to live by realizing the pain and destruction caused by the pleasure, because of which he is trapped in the mire of delusion. The mind awakened by this pain will renounce sloth and sleep and awaken right knowledge to enable to realize their triviality and impermanence and their delusion. Once these objects get off his mind, he will experience a happiness within his soul.

The sphere of delusion is very vast : non-happening of events according to one's expectations; being trapped in useless thoughts; not observing right conduct through behaviour and speech; entertaining fears and doubts about the loss of objects and persons dear to him; fear of loss and defeat etc., to name a few. He seldom lives in the present i.e. lacks presence of mind and memory to conduct his life properly.

To get deliverance from this fetter, one must go on doing his present duty properly, courageously and mindfully enduring whatever comes one's way, with time and age. Very importantly, he should adorn himself in the role of spectator, witnessing one's own self that is manifested as bliss and is sparkling moment, turning away from the feeling of pain. A mind thus absorbed like a spectator will free itself of this fetter through right knowledge, which will soon lead to the attainment of salvation.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend) continued ...
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(26)

Others in themselves weak, as outward joy they seek,
Appease they Nature's freak; their acts of ills be-speak;
In meditation insight, sure tells their height of plight,
Have compassion outright for them, for, live they tight.

(27)

Men reflect other's guilt, think then wrong at full tilt,
All being is such as built, from truth-carriage be spilt;
In mind one's quality flash, you praise, avoid act rash,
Don't clan of ill-will dash, and comes about no clash.

(28)

May not your mind intend to good end, you do bend,
Let your pride much pretend, you see peace to extend;
It sees one's sins and faults, often, itself to exalt,
May not your faith default, ignore its all to halt.

(29)

They can't do all right act, oblivious live in fact,
Leaves move by wind's impact; they by object's contact;
With forgiveness you stay, blind eye to their wrongs pay,
Be angry in no way, because your peace live may.

(30)

Cease one, then to be a kind, with pains evil as bind,
Then mind may lose temper; for right conduct purblind;
One then, noble remain; his balance to maintain,
One's conduct be to pain; not imitate by being vain.

(31)

I share pleasure of all, who is comforted, well!
Proper praise go to them as good and fine who dwell;
Becomes mere compassion for men in pains who stay,
But who play foul, for them, I see nothing to say.

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DAY 8

When two persons come face to face, God manifests Himself for a transitory moment, just like a flash, and the two persons interact with each other under the spell of the Almighty, all pervasive omnipresent God. The two persons interact with each other suddenly, on the spur of the moment, without any pre-conditions or pre-meditation. For example, at that moment God makes one person look like a friend, a benefector, or a relation and makes someone else look like a harmful enemy or a hostile person. This sudden short-lived comprehension is just like a ripple suddenly born at that particular moment. In reality, it is a momentary, sudden, fleeting manifestation of the all pervasive, omnipresent Almightily God Himself, appearing in both the persons. But because of the inherent, ingrained ignorance, which has a strong foot-hold in the person, he starts treating all these reactions as generating from his own person, from his 'ego' or 'I', which is ever present in a man, entangling him into its claws. When a person gets liberated from the fetter of 'ego' or 'I', only then he will experience the pervasive, omnipresent Almighty God everywhere.

In the holy scripture the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna declares that He manifests Himself most gloriously in a sudden fleeting moment and thereby makes the human being behave and react according to His own will. But human beings entertain false illusions and consider that it was their own ego or 'I' which initiated their actions and reactions towards one another. They are completely ignorant and oblivious of the force which compelled them to behave in that particular manner at that particular moment. The fact, however remains that through His momentary manifestation and intervention the Almighty, God generated emotions between the two parties conversing at that particular moment in that particular situation, and consequent reactions.

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DAY 9

A person will react according to his inner impulses. Nobody intentionally plans his inner impulses, nor reacts in the same manner every time. It is Almighty God, residing within every human being, who controls and manipulates human actions and reactions. One must always be alert towards the indications coming from the inner spiritual force or Almighty God. There is some inherent, internal, invisible spiritual power which first generates some latent emotional stimulation in a human being which is then expressed in external, visible behaviour openly. This external visible expression of the internal, latent emotion has been named as the manifested form *(vyakta)* of the divine spirit (soul), in the visible, tangible form. Lord Krishna has repeatedly ordained Arjuna thourghout the Gita: "O Arjuna ! you must devotedly worship the Divine Spirit, which is present everywhere and in everything, whatever you observe with your own physical eyes. Only then you will achieve spiritual salvation, and eternal emancipation *(moksha)* from the worldly fetters."

So, first and foremost, a person has to give up his 'ego' or 'I', only afterwards other people will start giving up theirs while dealing with him. To achieve this, one must understand and realize within one's own self that the mind, which is ever changing, goes on exhibiting a new and unexpected ego every moment. Right from the birth of a child, every day and every moment, the ego transforms itself and never remains the same. The divine spirit, which is eternal, omnipresent and all pervasive goes on altering human ego every moment and similarly all the attendant knowledge accumulated during the developmental stages also goes on changing. Besides, the knowledge related to body, senses, mind and intellect also gets transformed every moment.

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DAY 10

It is accepted that the ego is an important impediment for the mind to meditate, and it is essential to extricate it to make progress. One must first realize this fact and then with the help of meditation etc. one must surrender one's ego at the feet of God, as like all other things this ego also has been generated by Him. One should be cautious and judicious about the ego while dealing in the external world. Also one must essentially, sincerely and devotedly inculcate, observe and practise the divine qualities of dispassion, contentment etc. Besides one should engage in austerity and bear the pain of renunciation of things and objects dear to one. Thus, without indulging in any improper behaviour one must sincerely practise and uphold noble and right conduct under all circumstances in one's worldly relations.

When one sincerely observes all the aforesaid sacred qualities in one's social dealings, one's mind will gradually become introverted and will withdraw from the external world. One will easily recognise that one and the same stream of divine consciousness is universally flowing everywhere. There is only one divine power (God) which manages, controls and administers this whole universe, and manipulates living beings like puppets, through its divine dynamism.

This divine power (God) manifests itself in strange modes, and in unexpected places, adopting unusual forms. If one completely surrenders oneself and if one starts depending on the divine power, which causes and controls all the movements of the universe, one will get liberated from the clutches of the divine dynamism *(maya)*. Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita has warned mankind repeatedly to surrender oneself to His loving care, as without Lord's power it is for an individual to understand the functioning of divine dynamism *(maya)* and to get out of its powerful domain.

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DAY 11

To disengage oneself from delusion (*moha*), and to witness God's presence everywhere, first of all, one must identify the fetters and make one's mind fully conscious of them. One should also awaken one's discriminatory intellectual powers. One should sit in solitude for sometime, and also control one's urge to sleep (inertia). Through introspection and meditation one should gain awareness of one's mental compulsions and fetters and recognize them with the same names mentioned in the scriptures of yore and experienced by great seers, yogis, scholars and dedicated devotees who were able to turn their minds inwards for such inquiry.

If one wants to liberate one's mind one must turn it inwards and withdraw it from the external world. One must recognize one's inner, spiritual truths and must inspire one's mind in these or similar words : "O mind ! there is no other method for your spiritual well-being and your ultimate divine welfare. Your well-being lies only in following your inner, spiritual truths." Further, all the while one must take care of one's irrestible urge for sleep (inertia), lethargy, laziness etc. keeping one's mind engaged in meditation, having only the minimum required sleep. Consequently, one's mind will start experiencing the inner truths and by concentrating on them will simultaneously start withdrawing from the external mundane world. One will start experiencing a continuous mental bliss even when one sits in solitude for hours together, living within oneself, without any external mundane material dependence. This type of life is called spiritual life, but this divine bliss of the spiritual life is experienced only during the practice of meditation.

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DAY 12

To enter into such a 'spiritual life', one must start recognizing everywhere the presence of Almighty God, revealed in the form of divine bliss which one experienced within oneself during meditation. The seeker should start accepting the fact that all the manifested drama of existence is nothing but God's own revelation, and whatever happens in the external world is verily ordained by the Almighty, God.

To achieve this divine goal of viewing the external visible universe as a manifestation of the Almighty God, it is essential to pursue the golden path of 'religion'. The word religion means to adopt, i.e. to strictly follow the principles and practices prescribed therein, which requires cultivation of qualities which do not come as a habit. The seeker has to withdraw his mind from the outside world, and through introspection and meditation tune his life. Thus he comes to lead a spiritual life, controlled by inner spiritual forces, divine in nature. Every individual should strive to attain the inner bliss through leading a pious religious life.

Religious life entails pursuance of all great powers of liberation like dispassion, forgiveness, politeness, contentment, tolerance, austerity and renunciation in one's life, practised and suggested by saints and seers from time to time, keeping one's mind focused on Almighty God all the while. Also one must cultivate respectful regards for those seers and saints who discovered and described the path (road-map) to this inner bliss. To summarize, one must have faith in the religious fraternity.

Thus through the dissolution of worldly fetters, one will experience internal divine bliss, with a vision of Almighty God, manifested everywhere in the external world. To attain this coveted state, one has to tolerate the hardships during the practice of meditation and renunciation of worldly comforts; keeping his social behaviour perfect and upright.

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DAY 13

Meditation implies that one should utilise one's intellectual faculty or mental power to grasp and understand one's inner divine reality, by withdrawing one's mind from the enticement of the external mundane world. Actually, this faculty can either be consolidated and employed in realising the inner divine reality or be left free to wander and get entangled in the ephemeral pleasures of the external mundane world. Properly directed, once this faculty or power starts recognising the inner spiritual realities, the seeker will gradually set his attitudes in tune with them and accordingly lead his life. As soon as the worldly material comforts lose their strong pull and charm, it may safely be presumed that one's mind stands withdrawn from worldly attractions and is progressing well on the spiritual path.

This requires a thorough understanding of the human nature or the force of compulsive habits, which one has cultivated, acquired, and stored for a long time, and which repeatedly push and thrust one forcefully to get entangled in the worldly comforts. It is essential for a person to spare some time to sit in some solitary place to practise meditation. Simultaneously, he should also cultivate the habit of enduring some amount of pain without which, it is not possible to dissipate the force of compulsive habits. One should, all the while, keep one's devotion and dedication to God as one's prime duty, keeping always in one's mind the fact that it is one and the same Almighty God dwelling and manifesting Himself in every person, instead of respecting the ego in each person.

In one's lonely solitary moments, one should try to find honest answers from one's mind regarding the permanence of material things or objects that provide one satisfaction and pleasure and keep one chained to them. Only after resolving the true relationships of oneself with these worldly objects and persons it is possible for one to initiate withdrawal from them.

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DAY14 (2nd Long Weekend)

9. Worldly Fetters : Ego/Pride/Self-grandeur/Arrogance *(Maan)*

Pride means recognition and respect. This fetter of pride binds a person as ego. It is another name of ego consciousness. Whatever is seen as the doer in a body is accordingly recognised as his ego. This ego identification in many forms in a human being makes him do many types of deeds, and fetters him in many ways with thoughts of attachment, aversion, doubt and duty. As a person is regarded so are his attitudes of pride, anger, jealousy, etc.

However, if this identity or regarding the bodies as different kind of persons is not there, the person will see the same power driving the bodily machines in all as indivisible and non-dual and with this awareness and right knowledge, there will be no distinctions. When a person can see the supreme consciousness or God in all places by bringing an end to his pride through discipline, meditation and right knowledge, only then will his self be free from pleasure or pain resulting from many types of action that arise from attachment and aversion, and there will be freedom from this pride. In this state of freedom, the bliss of this universal consciousness will bring peace to the self.

The experience of pride binds a person in several ways. It keeps a person entangled somewhere in the form of respect, somewhere as disrespect, and by appearing pleasant or otherwise, in many kinds of wrong tendencies like anger etc. and by creating many states of pleasure or pain. Regarding himself as superior and others as inferior etc. a person is trapped in a never-ending entanglement. A person continues to dwell in this world of pride and cannot see the same God in all. Also a physical action will last only for a short while but the pride of being the doer of the action makes him keep this pride in his mind forever.

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DAY 14 (2nd Long Weekend) continued ...

Worldly Fetters :

Similarly there is the pride of intellect, power, privilege, caste, family and many other kinds of worldly pride as that of religion, knowledge and devotion etc. Though it is not visible outworldly, it is hidden in the mind. It leads to such conduct in speech and in action that a person can never rest in peace. This false pride and arrogance keeps him in doubt as to what others think of him. Thus being an ordinary person, he thinks himself to be a great person.

When a person continues to find his identity only in the spheres of this world, he will never be free from the cycles of birth and death, owing to insatiable worldly passion meaning being in the world *(bhav-trishna)*. Then, there is another manifestation of pride. A person's ego is developed in something that brings him pleasure. The feeling that a person is happy is also a manifestation of his ego. Thus one acquires his known ego through frequently getting pleasure. He lives as his ego. A person's spiritual actions towards salvation are always obstructed by his pride as the seeker continues to live in the world. Also, if a person is once given respect, he will be pleased and will feel that he is a respectable person, but is sad and sorrowful if that respect is obstructed through some cause. This is all the play of his pride which gets hurt on the turn of events.

If the ego of the external world is not apparent, it means it is hidden behind the veil of spiritual ignorance. A person cannot be at peace until he gains right knowledge. Therefore, a person must try to attain the ultimate state of salvation by removing the veil of spiritual ignorance. As soon as the state of bliss is manifested all kinds of insatiable worldly passions will vanish and the person in his pure and peaceful state of mind will be steadfast in his soul, the state of ultimate salvation.

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Day 14 *(2nd Long Weekend) Continued ...*
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(32)

In oneself know full life for peace and bliss divine,
Noble conduct outwards, inwards live feelings fine;
See reason, truth of life, why right life is to own,
In meditation, stay wise with efforts well-timed known.

(33)

As one is offended, his pride is hurt with pain,
By one's conduct or act, his mind views wrong in strain;
In wrong feelings, wrong will and emotions in taint,
In all proceeding wrong who holds himself is a saint.

(34)

One with offended being all its intended call,
Against pretended foe with moods attended all;
By pain unknown, pleasure gone, disown self not to moan,
Charity alone be shone; not be shown anger flown.

(35)

Things fall in view as bright, runs one after delight,
Not seeks but guideline right, and fights shy of insight;
For contemplation rise, sin in ignorance lies,
You know to do things wise, practised wrong tighten ties.

(36)

Prevails as passion's gale, one fails to countervail,
Impulse that entails pain, how hail right to avail?
If truth does shine, declines one's unfine being confined,
Inclined to refined all, finds joy in soul, not blind.

(37)

In low resistance flows evil mind, slow to know,
How be it towed to good, follow avowed all vow;
Reduce to nil ill-states, with a will, good all fulfil,
Be killed wrongs as stilled rights for ever, still gain skill.

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DAY 15

One can learn all the answers through a personal study of the scriptures or by learning from experienced persons. However it may not prove much effective, as it will always depend on one's mind's strength to break the bonds of one's personal nature and personal habits. Only meditation can lead one from strength to strength to abandon one's vices. The desire to achieve something noteworthy, or to become an authority are all too common targets human beings fix for their materialistic growth. More so, no one can live without activity at any time in his life. Here, a person would do better to select that activity which brings him durable happiness and everlasting satisfaction and should be aware of ephemeral pleasure providing glamorous activities. For example, a person experiences some satisfaction and happiness by sleeping. However, will it not be better if he derives forever the same pleasure, happiness and satisfaction, even during his wakeful state ? The aim is to achieve something permanent and blissful, and this aim can be achieved by meditation, introspection and shunning of wrong tendencies.

It is, therefore, essential that one should get oneself free from the worldly engagements and entanglements, through devotion and dedication to God, surrendering one's ego at His feet. One should analyse one's mistakes and weaknesses and learn from one's personal experiences. One should withdraw from all worldly entanglements so that one permanently becomes fully satisfied and contented. Unless one concentrates one's mind in one's inner soul, one will never experience the divine bliss. Side by side, one should recognize one's fetters and get rid of them as emphasized earlier. One should start with ignorance, the root of all fetters, seeking God's help to cultivate the power of enlightenment (opposite of ignorance) to understand things, events and thoughts in their proper perspective.

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DAY 16

One can settle in one's inner spiritual world only when one adopts the path of meditation. The meditation should be natural and normal and not an enforced one. It should satisfy the following four conditions : The first is that one is able to meditate (concentrate one's mind), whenever one wants, i.e. at anytime irrespective of any time schedule. The second condition is that one is able to practise it at any and every place, without any rigid pre-condition of a specific place (open place, under a roof or any other fixed place). The third condition is that it should not be controlled by specific persons or consumption of products. The fourth and the final condition refers to 'no-time barrier', that is one is able to meditate in one's mind for as long as one wants, instead of short-lived and momentary sessions. When all these four conditions are met, the meditation is termed as natural and normal. Further, it has to become like an established habit to garner power to completely disengage one's mind at one's own sweet will and start relishing and living in one's spiritual world. In the inner spiritual world, one does not experience hot and cold sensations of this mundane world. Also, a habitual, normal and natural meditation is of much greater value than sleep in which one is relieved from pain and suffering till asleep—because one has disengaged and dissociated one's mind from this mundane world during one's fully conscious, wakeful and alert life.

Thus the cardinal signs of a natural meditation are that it is independent of any specific person or product, habitat, place or time schedule factor. Only that person who possesses the following five powers, can practise such effortless and natural meditation : (i) confidence in right faith (*shraddha*) (ii) right effort and energy *(veerya)*, (iii) mindfulness *(smriti)*, (iv) meditation (*dhyana*) and (v) right knowledge *(pragna)*. When these powers control one's behaviour all the time, there will be no hurdles in one's natural and normal meditation.

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DAY 17

Of these five powers, one has to cultivate and nourish the following three powers : mindfulness *(smriti)*, right effort *(veerya)* and meditation (*dhyana*) in one's pursuit, as normally these powers fail to manifest of their own accord to control one's behaviour. These remain subdued under the influence of the demon of lust. In this regard, Lord Krishna exhorts in the Bhagavad Gita : "Every person must learn and practise to train his mind for action, without seeking any gainful fruits or rewards for his efforts." In other words, one's mind must renounce all desires for gainful rewards of one's actions. However, the entanglements and enslavement of the human mind in the mundane world as well as his physical ailments and mental disturbances etc., do not let the person lead an unentangled life and he remains pre-occupied with useless, futile worries and anxieties resulting even in physical and psycho-somatic disorders. Moreover, because of the attending irresistible desires burdening the human mind all the time, a person fails to practise normal and effortless meditation. These impending worries and anxieties, also render him incapable of cultivating and develop these vital powers.

During meditation, instead of developing concentration and consolidation, one's mind may develop the strong urge and irresistible desire to sleep, under the spell of the strong wish to enjoy rest and the comfort of sleep. Whatever attracts and whatever appeals to the mind to obtain pleasure, the mind easily hankers after it developing an irresistible and strong desire for its fulfilment. The human mind is thus enticed by all three viz. worldly pleasure *(sukh)*, irresistible lust *(kama)* and attachment *(raga)*. One who is able to recognise their mighty role in shaping one's actions can save oneself from utter ruin. That is why it is recommended that all actions of a seeker must be free from the desire of the rewards (*nishkam karma*).

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DAY 18

One must always remember that uniting the mind with action with utmost devotion and executing all actions with utmost dedication is called *karmayoga*. For leading life according to the precepts of *karmayoga*, first of all one should study and scrutinise one's mind when it is involved and entangled in the execution of all types of actions. Later, one should disengage one's mind from the external world and engage in the work in hand. Thus his mind will acquire and develop simultaneously three powers; (i) meditation (*dhyana*), (ii) mindfulness *(smriti)*, and (iii) right effort and energy *(veerya)*. Though appearing as simple practices, unless one translates and practises all the three in one's daily life, one will not acquire their intimate and practical knowledge to reap their benefits and fruits. For that one will have to probe in detail all one's activities, i.e. one should be mentally fully alert and active while performing actions so that they may become perfect and par-excellence. Also, one's mind should be fully aware of all the obstacles one's is likely to face during the execution of one's actions (*karmas*).

During the execution of an action one's mind will notice mainly those obstacles which strongly obstruct the qualification of one's very strong desires, and at that point one should at once become mentally alert. When one's mind starts becoming conscious of such turbulence and distractions, it indicates that it is ready for meditation, meaning that one has acquired the ability to meditate even when walking and strolling. Thus focusing on all the five sense organs and the sixth faculty of his mind within one's self, and thereby concentrating and consolidating the mind one will be lifted to a mental state called meditation (*dhyana*) or absorbed meditation with serenity (*samadhi*).

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DAY 19

Disengagement of the sense organs from the external mundane world, has been called by Yogis, as *pratihar*. Whenever one focusses one's mind on any action at hand, then all one's senses will stand in a line to follow the mind. This process is called *pratihar*. But the term *pratihar* also has a different connotation. It implies that one's mind is leading one towards the external world for gratification of one's habitual, material comforts. Thus, one has to disengage his mind from the external world and its material comforts and direct it towards the inner, spiritual world, through education and suggestion. One has to subjugate the latent, hidden under-currents of his subconscious mind, while performing actions, by developing the ability to turnig one's mind away from indulgence in thoughts and desires which are contrary to the work in hand. This courage and power to regulate one's mental energy is called *veerya*. When the mind develops and adopts this method, it will lead to augmenting meditation.

When one's mind develops within itself the ability or the faculty of discrimination between good and evil, with the help of meditation, it is known as truth bearing knowledge *(pragna)*. With the help of meditation when one's mind is able to clearly discern all these wrong tendencies generated by one's desires and when one's mind also starts avoiding and ignoring them as soon as such tendencies crop up, one reaches a stage where one's mind experiences spiritual knowledge, called realization of truth-bearing knowledge *(pragna)*, which guides the mind to dedicatedly pursue the highway of spiritual salvation or divine deliverance.

One must also have complete conviction that by developing confidence in right faith (*shraddha*) to pursue the religious path, one will achieve salvation from the fetters. Thereafter, one should learn to perform one's duties with one's conscious, alert and heedful mind.

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DAY 20

As long as the mind is busy in knowing the external material world, the mind remains shrouded in darkness, or ignorance *(avidya)*, which forms the main obstacle in the path of spiritual salvation. Gradually, on examining and scrutinsing the working of one's mind in minute details one will become aware of and easily recognise the ten fetters viz (i) viewing (*drishti bandhan*), (ii) suspicion (*sanshay*), (iii) undue consideration for rules of conduct (*sheelvrat paramarsh*), (iv) attachment (*raga*), (v) aversion (*dwesha*), (vi) love of objective spheres (*roop-raga*), (vii) love of formless spheres (*arup-raga*), (viii) delusion (*moha*), (ix) ego (*maan*) and (x) ignorance *(avidya)*, repeatedly referred to earlier. One should identify and remain aware of these fetters which are the source of pain and suffering for every individual, and strive to disengage from them through meditation in a phased manner. If the mind withdraws itself from the mundane external world and concentrates and consolidates within itself, then the life energy of the person will also concentrate and consolidate within his body, leading to revelation and realization of mental and spiritual peace, the hallmark of God.

As a matter of fact, the major devil is one's irresistible desires, one's arch enemy. Recognizing this if one cultivates the noble quality of renunciation in one's mind, one's life will become normal and peaceful, and one's mind will start disengaging itself from the mundane world. This will also result in the development of devotion and dedication to God all the while, enjoying the divine bliss ordained in the spiritual oneness and unity of the individual soul with the supreme (mingling of *atma* and *paramatma*). Otherwise, if left uncontrolled, the personal wishes and whims will continue to interfere during the execution of every action and thereby keeping the seeker's mind engaged and enticed in the external world.

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DAY 21 *(3rd Weekend)*

10. Worldly Fetters: Nescience *(Avidya)*:

The spiritual ignorance is the force that hides the universal consciousness as right knowledge pervading equally in all bodies and in the whole universe. The fetters of attachment, aversion, doubt, delusion, etc. arise from a person's association with objects and other persons of the world. These fetters may not be active when they turn him towards the world. But the material that constitutes them in their passive or dilapidated state hides a person's right knowledge. That means, the element in the passive state of the fetters of attachment, aversion, doubt, delusion, etc. is the spiritual ignorance or spiritual nescience. This is just like the sense organs such as eye, ear etc. which go on doing their work in a waking person but which though they exist are lost in ignorance when that person goes to sleep.

If a person realizes the universal consciousness, his ignorance is destroyed along with all its manifestations. But the meditator must bring it into his experience through his own right knowledge and efforts. Even in meditation, the family of ignorance like attachment, aversion etc. obstructs the realization of the true self. Time and again, the force of ignorance pushes him either towards sleep or towards worldly objects by manifesting the wrong tendencies of desire, anger etc. in his waking state. If a sincere meditator can endure the tension and pressure of the fetters of attachment, aversion etc. and if he keeps his intellect awakened and if he makes up his mind to renounce them by realizing their triviality and if he endures the pain of loss of the objects by realizing that they are the cause of all misery, it will develop such a power in his mind that the fetters of attachment, aversion, etc. will be broken one by one in course of time and in that state of freedom (from all fetters), the soul manifested as right knowledge will shine forth. This is the first direct apprehension of the soul and it has to be sustained to experience bliss.

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DAY 21 *(3rd Weekend) continued ...*

Worldly Fetters : Nescience *(avidya)*

Branches of ignorance are visible in a common person in many different ways in the flow of empty thoughts without a clearly formed object of happiness, or with specific thoughts after developing a definite impression of a pleasure-giving object, turrning into desire to obtain it. Both are indeed traps of the world. If the spiritual ignorance is dispelled in the very beginning and if the thought of the pursuit of some worldly object does not arise in the mind, and if the seeker keeps on watching the flow of this spiritual ignorance every moment like a spectator, realizing the triviality of this world and its pleasures, in course of time he will be rewarded with the vision of his true self, manifested as right knowledge and experience eternal bliss of universal consciousness. This is ultimate salvation, i.e. the truth resulting in spontaneous experience of the bliss of one's own soul after all fetters of spiritual ignorance like ego, delusion, attachment, aversion etc., have been destroyed and after the pain of these fetters has come to an end.

It is useful for human beings to learn another manifestation of spiritual ignorance. The pleasure of worldly objects and persons that a worldly man experiences ends completely in pain. But this truth remains hidden and the mind sees only that transient pleasure and a view is formed accordingly. This is a fetter and an impediment on the path. Also, the spiritual ignorance shows this body as everlasting, and ever seeks the company of others. This is spiritual ignorance. The thoughts of the world of desire, related to those persons in whom he has entangled right from his birth are all the time haunting his mind. The world of desires (*kamaloka*) means that his aim continues to lead the life of external self interest and comfort organizing programmes for the same. One must rid oneself of these fetters.

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DAY 22

One should acknowledge and accept the latent (hidden) presence of that one and only universal force, the all pervading God among all the living and non-living organisms. One's fetters and their close companions, such as lust, greed, anger, jealousy etc. alongwith countless other vices, do not let the human mind recognize and acknowledge the universal presence of the all pervading God. Instead, the human mind remains engaged, enticed and entangled in the persons and products of the external world, controlled by time and space. If the seeker wants to emancipate himself from all these, he must all the time think and ruminate about the presence of omnipresent God and feel His existence everywhere.

In Hindu religion, there is a well-known practice to offer food with utmost devotion and dedication, first of all to Almighty God or the universal supreme consciousness. The individual soul (*atma*) is part and parcel of the universal soul *(paramatma)* or universal supreme Consciousness. Thus it may be inferred that the correct method of offering food to God (who is present in every living being) implies that the person should take his food with a fully alert and conscious mind. While taking food one should make one's mind free from all types of prejudices and biases, then one may rest assured that the Almighty God has accepted and partaken one's offering of food. Also while taking food, one's mind should observe and exercise spiritual values as mental alertness (*smriti*), spiritual resolve *(veerya)*, renunciation (*vairagya*) and mental tranquility (*shanti*). Thus in a symbiolic manner, his offerings are accepted by spiritual powers represented by Goddess *Durgamata*, God *Rama* and other dieties. Also, while taking meals one's mind must observe and exercise spiritual virtues like *shanti*, *smriti* etc.

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DAY 23

A person who is able to avoid and overcome the onslaught of mental bias with the help of his spiritual courage and who can shatter his fetters, is called *singh purush*. He is as strong as a lion and easily overpowers and vanquishes the beasts of his personal prejudices with the power of mental alertness *(smriti)*. Like Goddess Durga, who represents mental alertness, the *singh purush* subjugates and controls the lion of his personal prejudices and selfish vices. In the Sanskrit language, the word, '*Durg*' or '*Durga*' means the most fortified fort which is not easy to approach and very difficult to conquer. In a similar way, a person who has fortified his mind with spiritual alertness and does not fall on easy prey to mental prejudices, and who also faces situations, otherwise difficult to handle and control, represents Goddess *Durga*. Mental alertness implies spiritual strength and one should always keep it under his control. *Durga Maa* is ever present in one's mind in the form of spiritual alertness *(smriti)*, forgiveness (*kshama*) and religious confidence *(shraddha)*. Goddess *Durga* also represents mental and spiritual power, which is omnipresent and universal even though Her presence and power are not acknowledged by certain specific persons and in certain limited places.

Keeping one's mind fully alert is called *'smriti'*. By keeping the mind one gets rid of all of his fetters and vices and cultivates divine qualities to achieve spiritual salvation. Such a person is called a 'liberated soul' (*mukt atma*) who will always be welcomed to enter the celestial abode of Almighty God, if and when he dies, he will have free access to *'Haridwar'*.

In essence, one should always keep one's mind conscious, alert and watchful to control one's actions in all situations in an efficient manner.

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DAY 24

One has to augment urgent steps to reduce one's desires and demands for material goods and worldly comforts, and replace these with consciousness and divine knowledge to strengthen one's ability and capacity of renunciation, without worrying for spiritual salvation, of which one has already been ensured in one's pursuit.

As long as a person's five senses do not submit and surrender to his intellect, and as long as his mind does not become stable, he can not practise and enjoy meditation. His mind should not get tainted and develop whims and biases, when his mind is devoted to the work in hand, to develop self control. Thus when a person who has succeeded in restricting his limitless desires for the material goods and physical comforts of the mundane world, and when he consciously makes efforts to disengage and disentangle his mind from the external world, his capability and capacity for meditation will become natural, easy and smooth like a habit. Ultimately, meditation will become so easy and convenient for him that even during his formal working hours, social interactions and everyday life, he will be able to achieve the peace and bliss of samadhi (absorbed,truth-seeking observation) and facilitate his spiritual salvation.

The union or commitment of the mind in the execution of an action is called '*karmayoga*'. As expressed in the Bhagavad Gita, 'A person cannot survive even for a second without performing an act'. However, when one performs one's actions in a spirit of dedication it amounts to devoted worship (*bhaktiyoga*). When one thus joins and commits one's mind to his actions, it indicates that he has developed the art of meditation *(dhyanayoga)* which helps one in the realization of spiritual knowledge.

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DAY 25

The seeker should, first of all, learn to control his mind and concentrate on one point, by engaging all his five senses and mind to act in co-ordination in all activities, including the routine ones i.e. washing, bathing, eating, drinking, social interaction etc. If he spends some time in observing his mental restlessness it means that he has learnt to tolerate suffering. When one learns to take in one's stride both adverse as well as pleasant situations, and when one carries on, one crosses the threshold of superior meditation entering the path of liberation. Natural meditation does not need any specific pre-conditions. If one consciously decides and withdraws himself from the external world, if one may go into meditation, needing a little food to satisfy one's hunger.

'*Karmayoga*' demands full devotion and dedication to work with concentration and full alertness of one's mind. Also one's mind should gradually give up the desires for material comforts of the mundane world which are neither essential nor everlasting. The effort and resolve to completely get rid of material longings and yearnings is called spiritual strength or divine courage *(veerya)*. One must thus get rid of all the vices which entice and engulf the mind, by keeping the mind always alert, active and conscious. If the goddess of mental alertness Maa Durga is kind and considerate, conscious and awake to his supplications, she will point out the devil of vices as soon as they start entering one's mind, so that one through sincere efforts can throw them out. For seeking help from *Durga Maa*, one's mind should learn to practise meditation to awaken spiritual knowledge in one's mind. Gradually, thorough discovering the religious and spiritual way of life one achieves spiritual liberation.

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DAY 26

When a person develops the habit of performing all his deeds in the external world with full mental concentration, devotion and dedication, he will surely develop the ability, the strength (confidence) and the capability to concentrate his mind while sitting in isolation to understand his inner spiritual truths. To the extent a person can withdraw his mind from all other places and focus it in the execution of the action in hand, he will be able to devote, and concentrate his mind to know and understand his inner, spiritual truths, during meditation.

In the practice of meditation, there are several mental and physical obstacles and the seeker needs to be aware of them. The five mental obstacles are : (a) opinions and attitudes (*drishti*), (b) suspicion and doubts (*sanshaya*), (c) desires and temptation (*icchha*), (d) anger (*krodha*) and (e) lethargy and sleep (*aalasya and nidra*).

It is an established fact that no worldly action, deed or activity can be creditably accomplished and completed without full attention and concentration of mind in its execution. That is why it is essential to unite and devote peace the mind while carrying out the work in hand. This is *karmayoga*, the *yoga* of sincere devotion and dedication of mind in performing the duties. If not done mindfully the seeker's repeated doings of daily life acquires the status of a habit, the second nature, which enslave, him. The main hurdle encountered here is that the person does not want his ego or self-image which he has nurtured so far to perish. The ideal way is that one should live in the external world strictly in accordance with the religious and spiritual laws, which an ordinary man neither understands nor adopts. To realize one's inner spiritual truth one must regulate one's sense organs and one's habits and insulate oneself against any antisocial behaviour.

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DAY 27

Unless one performs good actions in the external world, he will be unable to take control of one's life, which is dominated by irresistible urges and force of habits which are nurtured by one, and which dictate one's actions. This habitual force is not discernible to an ordinary individual, but it is clearly and definitely perceived by those who practise meditation. Also one must be aware of the fact that the force of habits cannot distinguish between what is good or what is bad for a person. To resolve the dilemma one must observe the ethical, sacred and religious principles, guarding himself from taking actions leading to violence, stealing and misconduct.

All these vices and passions are like waves of the universal nature *(prakriti)*, which are continuously rising and falling within the minds of all living creatures, plants, animals and human beings. However their impact is more perceptible in human beings, as anger, greed, ego, desire etc., expressed in their actions. When a person after experiencing some satisfaction and happiness from an object or a person starts thinking and ruminating about the object or the person, he gradually develops the desire to possess that object. All these efforts of the person according to Hindu mythology are classed as '*rajoguna*' one of the three Conative tendencies of the mind, the others being '*tamoguna*' and '*satoguna*', *rajoguna* keeps propelling a person towards the external mundane world, till the time he gets fed up, till he gets completely exhausted and prefers to withdraw. This physical exhaustion and mental withdrawal from conative efforts indicates *tamoguna*, or mental lassitude and lethargy. During this stage a person develops laziness and the urge to sleep (total inactivity).

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

10. Worldly Fetters : Ignorance (Avidya)

When one contemplates about his soul, his spiritual ignorance will begin to diminish and will ultimately be dispelled and the knowledge of the self will start developing manifested as right knowledge. Ultimately when a person thinks of his true welfare and his permanent self, he will have to renounce all his desires that ultimately cause him pain and will have to practise austerity and will have to endure pain for a brief while for renouncing worldly desires. When he keeps awake for a sufficient time steadfast in his solitude after renouncing the delusion of sleep and attachment for pleasure and when he protects his mind against wrong view, doubt, anger for the world of desires, his mind and sense organs will open out to universal and supreme consciousness, making sure that his spiritual ignorance hiding the supreme consciousness has been destroyed and that now he will not seek his narrow interest. He will find only the words of universal consciousness pleasant to his ears. Infinite forms of universal consciousness will be visible and will appear a more pleasant than persons dear to him earlier. The perfumes of the universal consciousness, its touch and the sweet taste of meditation, the universal consciousness will bring to that person an experience of heaven. If the self, pre-occupied in the persons having this universal consciousness, is awakened and if the image of the uniform, universal consciousness is established in the mind, he spiritual ignorance hiding the sphere of the senses (*goloka*) will be destroyed, and the person will begin to have an experience of *brahmaloka*. Similarly, progressing onwards he enters into *vishnuloka* and finally into *shivloka*.

In these three spheres (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), the ego still persists, but after the complete destruction of spiritual ignorance, even the ego does not exist and the never-ending right knowledge remains. He attains salvation, escapes sorrows as also the cycle of 'birth' and 'death'.

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DAY 29

Dwelling in two conditions of the human mind, *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*, a person never gets a change to evolve to realize within himself *satwaguna* or the tendency to realize the inner truths. *Rajoguna* and *tamoguna* are the two permanent mental tendencies which represent *bhavtrishna* and *vibhavtrishna*, respectively. Both '*bhav trishna*' (insatiable worldly passion to achieve and establish one's personal identity in the external, mundane world) and *vibhavtrishna* (insatiable worldly passion to achieve a state of non-action and thereby non-entity in the external, mundane world) are the snare of the universal nature *(prakriti)*, One has to sever these snares of *bhavtrishna* and *vibhavtrishna* to liberate one's mind from its worldly engagements and entanglements propelled by the force of universal nature of the external material world. Only that person who fully understands and who fully knows these two types of nature (universal nature and human nature) and who is also aware of the ways to get rid of these two types of nature, can achieve the ultimate goal of spiritual salvation *(moksha)*. Universal nature (or universal elemental nature) implies the external, visible, material world which comes into existence when the five basic elements viz. earth, water, fire, air and sky come together. Human nature implies human temperament which is the essence of all his impulses and habits acquired since childhood. Such habits take the form of fetters. Beyond these two types of nature is the supreme soul called Sachchidanand (*sat chit anand*). The spiritual bliss, which belongs only to Sachchidanand has no end and never alters after one experiences it on acquiring spiritual knowledge through meditation and introspection.

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DAY 30

To achieve this supreme objective of salvation, firstly one has to follow and practise *Karmayoga*. One will have to sincerely and devotedly unite one's mind with the work in hand, taking into account the significance of the job. In society also, one must not indulge in grave and major evils such as violence, deception, misconduct, stealing, addiction, and various types of black marketing and greedy and selfish hoardings. By avoiding these evil actions and practices one will automatically start resisting the forces of the universal elemental nature, which are all the time active to motivate and compel the person to indulge in evil actions. Through ignoring these enticements to fall into doing evil actions one is able to cultivate resistance and to oppose these undesirable forces.

After achieving this objective, there are certain basic principles which help one's mind to turn inwards and practise meditation and introspection. The first principle is to observe and practise purity and cleanliness of body of surroundings and also of mind by cultivating godly qualities like friendliness, compassion, brotherhood, use of gentle words and a non-jealous attitude towards others' prosperity, position etc. The next principle for the seeker is to cultivate the habit of 'self-study' and 'introspection' to watch, understand and monitor his mental mechanisms. So 'self-study' comprises the detailed study of one's mind during one's solitary moments, tolerating the boredom of sitting alone, to dig deep into the inner spiritual truths. When one gradually starts understanding the mechanism of one's mind, one's inner knowledge gets activated and also starts augmenting one's resistance to habitual forces and the forces of universal elemental nature. For 'self study' the seeker is advised to enrich himself with the five virtues of 'yama' and simultaneously adopt and practise the five rules of '*niyam*', prescribed in *Ashtang Yoga* by *Patanjali*.

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DAY 31

The seeker on the path must have full faith in the universal all pervasive existence of supreme divine consciousness (Almighty God or *paramatma*). He should try to recognize and learn as to how the manifested mundane world (nature) is stimulating and motivating him to behave (act and react) in the external world. He should also accept that the same manifested mundane world (nature) is stimulating and motivating all other living creatures in the external world. Thus, it is one and the same supreme divine consciousness which exists in every single individual person in a miniature form (microcosm) which is called spirit or soul (*atma*), while it exists in a mega form (macrocosm) in this universe as an omnipresent, omniscient, eternal and endless form as supreme divine power. All the individual divine entities *(microcosm)*, join and merge to form one harmonious macrocosm, called *brahmand*. Nobody in this world functions as an independent, individual divine entity (soul). All human beings in this world, therefore, are being governed by the rule and regulations laid down by the supreme divine consciousness *(paramatma)*.

The manifested mundane world (nature) affects the human mind in various ways. As a person resolves something in his mind or as some thought enters his mind, a very similar thought starts manifesting itself in the mind of the other person confronting him. All this happens so automatically and so neither he nor the other person should be held responsible for any specific action, reaction or interaction. Analysing and interpreting every situation subjectively in this manner, he should try to monitor his actions and reactions. To acquire and achieve this subjective capability he should take help from spiritual beings in the manifested form in the visible, tangible world.

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APRIL

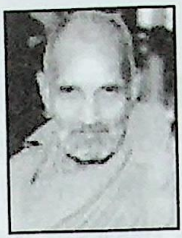
Purification Through Mantra japa

The mind is the seat of emotions. When we entertain positive emotions, our breathing becomes normal and we are filled with *prana shakti*. Negative emotions, on the other hand, upset our respiration and deplete the body of its vitality. *Mantra japa*, or the repetition of a sacred name (of God) is an easy but effective way of enhancing the life force. The chanting may be loud, in a low tone or done silently. It may be done alone or in groups. Silent mental japa is extremely powerful. Group chanting also is highly beneficial. When we chant any name of God with great devotion and sincere faith it creates grooves or channels in the brain through which *prana shakti* flows to every part of the body easily and unobstructed. This helps to purify the mind of all the dross (inferior thoughts and emotions) and make it calm and quiet, a necessary prerequisite for meditation. Combining mindful breathing with *mantra japa* is even more powerful in enhancing the concentration and single-pointedness of the mind. The psychology behind *mantra japa* is that sound has a direct bearing on our emotions. When the *mantra* (sound) is uttered with full faith in its potency (power) over a period of time, it will have a miraculous effect in silencing the noisy mind and making it ready for meditation.

Editor

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Day 1



APRIL

This subjective capability to analyse situations, actions and reactions, comes through practice. To begin with, one must nurture such feelings in one's mind: "My own mind does not let me sit in peace, my intellect gets foggy and my emotions become overexcited, my senses easily get distracted, my body quickly gets out of my control. At times, I do not get proper and normal sleep. I feel so helpless. Likewise, other people will be facing similar situations as I have to face. They too must be feeling hopeless". This is how the divine power of Almighty God affects the minds of other people silently and in a subtle manner, by conveying and communicating the latest intentions without any overt action. This may be referred to as "spiritual manipulations in the manifested form in the visible tangible world" referred to earlier. One should engage one's mind to unravel this mysterious riddle, commonly witnessed in the manifested, external world and try to recognize, understand and interpret its latent, covert implications to achieve spiritual peace within, and compassion and kindness to those who wrong one.

Cultivating and fostering such an attitude in one's mind, will fortify and strengthen in one's mind the following ten great noble qualities for attaining salvation; (i) friendly attitude towards others, (ii) sympathy and compassion for all, (iii) praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities in other people, (iv) showing indifference towards bad qualities in other people, (v) sincere intellectual forgiveness, (vi) noble and right conduct under all circumstances, (vii) charity and self-sacrifice, (viii) energetic and sincere efforts in every work, (ix) meditation and introspection, and (x) superior intelligence and truth bearing knowledge.

Quite often when some person spoils the seeker's peace of mind, he should soothe his mind by suggesting that the offending person must have become helpless due to the onslaught of his habitual nature, and should not be paid back in the same coin.

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DAY 2

By acquiring the material products generated by the forces of nature, a human being always comes across both pleasure and pain. The moot question worth serious consideration is : "How can a human being avoid pain?" The fact is nobody wants to experience pain and sufferings in the world at the cost of his happiness. If a person wants to protect himself from pain and suffering forever, then he should anaylse and understand his own personal nature and thereby control his temptations for the external material world through restraining the force of his habits and temperament to avoid actions causing pain and suffering.

A human being knows and experiences the external world with the help of his sense organs, and is quickly carried away by his irresistible desires and overpowering vices, under the influence of the compulsive habits and impulsive temperamental forces. He performs actions without realizing as to what type of happiness or sufferings such actions would ultimately end in. This type of mindset is due to his subjugation to the all powerful ignorance *(avidya)* which is concealing, covering and camouflaging the spiritual knowledge (*vidya*). As a matter of fact, he is completely oblivious of both *vidya* and *avidya* under the influence of his forceful compulsive habits and impulsive temperamental nature. Only the Almighty God (Bhagwan) possesses the divine capability of fully knowing *vidya* and *avidya*. The Lord knows what results a certain action would produce. He also knows the deeds indulged in the past have landed a person in the present day situation.

To understand, analyse and thereby to predict the result of the deeds (through introspection and meditation) is called the knowledge of *karmagati* of which a human being has some inkling and partial awareness.

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DAY 3

The extent to which the human being is aware of the implications of his *karmagati*, indicates the level of development and maturity of his intellectual abilities and intelligence. However, only Parameshwar the Almighty God, omnipotent and omnipresent Lord of the Universe has full and complete knowledge implied in the concepts of *karamgati* and *akaramgati*. In other words, what types of actions would finally ensure, procure and bestow which type of life and destiny to a living being, as also the qualities of the deeds to be performed by him in his present life to secure his rebirth as a human being, in his reincarnation again to continue with his noble and good actions on the path. The *Akaram gati* entails queries pertaining to person's deeds in his previous life and how and why the person has got his present life status, i.e. types of species and other related subjects.

Among the various attributes of the Lord, the following ones stand out distinctly : (i) He possesses all the valid spiritual knowledge (*vidya*), (ii) He is fully aware of what constitutes ignorance *(avidya)* and how it covers, camouflages and conceals the valid spiritual knowledge (iii) He knows all the implications of *karma-gati* i.e. what types of actions would result in what types of fruits and results and (iv) He is in full knowledge of all the implications of *akarma gati* i.e. the background information of one's previous births, actions incurred therein which resulted in his present life status (type of species) in his present incarnation. Besides, Bhagawan has full monopoly over two other spiritual capabilities, i.e. complete knowledge concerning (v) fetters *(bandhan)* and (vi) spiritual salvation *(moksha)*.

Every human being must strive to emulate to the possible extent these divine qualities, through devotion *(bhakti)* that includes adoration, devotion, dedication and worship of God to receive spiritual rewards.

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DAY 4

All the fetters form an integral part of human nature, which is an amalgam of compulsive habits and impulsive temperament. However, an ordinary person is not aware of this fact and he keeps on behaving and struggling under the influence of his fetters, without applying his rational faculties for their riddance.

Human life is dependent upon and is localized in the followings five areas ; (i) physical body (ii) senses (iii) mind (iv) intelligence or intellect and (v) sensibilities of pleasure and pain. Nature *(prakriti)* affects and dominates in its own typical manner the human body, the senses and intellect, in order to derive pleasure and avoid pain. To begin with, universal material nature establishes its full control over the individual by arousing and activating the sensibilities of pleasure and pain within him. Thus, nature *(prakriti)* generates the emotions of attachment and aversion according to the sensibilities of pleasure and pain, which finally leads the individual to the production of desire (*kama*), greed (*lobha*) and anger (*krodha*), to indulge in actions of grave consequences. This is the hallmark of ignorance (*avidya*) which needs to be completely wiped out by a truly committed and dedicated devotee of God, through the realization of spiritual knowledge which will also destroy ignorance.

A person learns only through meditation that his soul or inner spirit (which exists in the form of consciousness) never dies. The constitution and laws which govern the human mind and the mental world are so extremely complex, complicated and incomprehensible that an ordinary person cannot easily grasp and understand them. Similarly, it is very difficult to know and understand soul or the inner spiritual world. This human predicament is called ignorance. Human ignorance is indomitable and one must acquire spiritual knowledge to eradicate one's fetters to realize spiritual salvation.

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DAY 5

The human mind has two irresistible and insatiable tendencies, called *bhava-trishna* and *vibhava-trishna*. *Bhava trishna* means the irresistible, and insatiable tendency of the human mind to expand and multiply in the external mundane world, which implies the inculcation and cultivation of such emotions as attachment and aversion. The word '*bhava*' means to become or in other words, it means to become a friend or a foe or an intellectual or a noble person in the external social set-up. On the other hand, vibhav-trishna is that state of the human mind which when it gets exhausted, satiated and fed up with its emotional attachments and aversion and starts feeling lazy, lethargic and abnormally drowsy and finally seeks shelter in sleep. In the same manner, universal material nature *(prakriti)* gets fed up with its excessive indulgence in expansion, multiplication, degeneration and regeneration. Universal material nature experiences complete fulfilment and satisfaction in complete dissolution of the manifested universe where there is all darkness and inertia.

The fact is that nature has only two channels through which it operates, that is *bhava trishna* and *vibhava trishna*. A person who wants to establish full control over these two types of nature (universal material nature and circumscribed human nature), must first of all learn to accept and accommodate sufferings. To achieve this goal a person must develop the habit of carefully and intelligently analyzing, examining and repeatedly scrutinizing all his actions. He should also develop in himself both patience and courage to tolerate the sufferings generated by confrontation and opposition of personal nature (force of habit) bit by bit. He should garner and gather enough strength to boldly face the onslaught of personal nature (force of habit), which is possible only in course of time, gratifying the nutritional demands of body and mental demand for sleep in an appropriate and balanced manner.

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DAY 6

When excessive opposition to the demands of personal nature start producing mental tensions and the intellectual capabilities stop their proper functioning, rigid opposition to the demands of personal nature should be avoided. Under such conditions it is desirable to be lenient and accommodative towards the demands of personal nature and their partial gratification. But when the mind starts hankering after material comforts, then there is no harm in opposing and alienating the mind from seeking the material comforts. Every person should learn to oppose and resist the demands of personal nature for his own well being with persistent efforts, developing in himself optimum mental strength for achieving release from the forces of habit and temperament (worldly fetters). This will lead the seeker to realize spiritual salvation.

Every person spends his whole life in procuring worldly comforts and happiness, right from childhood, and whatever obstructs his way appears as his enemy. Non-availability of mundane comforts and happiness is experienced as suffering and to avoid it the person indulges in negative actions such as quarrelling, fighting, telling lies, stealing etc. When one does not possess the intellectual ability to understand the evil effects of these negative actions, it is much better to develop confidence in religious faith and ethical conduct to live and lead a peaceful and happy life. One must not develop the habit to accumulate unnecessary, meaningless worldly objects and must avoid being greedy for material comforts. After observing these precautions, one should follow with complete commitment these five tenets : (i) purity and cleanliness (ii) contentment (iii) austerity (iv) self-study and introspection and (v) strong conviction in the existence of some supreme universal divine power (God) exercising complete cosmic control.

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DAY 7 *(1st Weekend)*

Cosmological Consciousness *(Brahman)*

Brahman means Existence-Consciousness-Bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)*. Sat means existence or being oneself; Chit means consciousness, as being conscious of one's being ; ananda means Absolute Bliss. The manifested consciousness, in one's self, without pain, is Soul—the essence of which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)*, which is the inner most self of a living being. When pain disappears, this Existence-Consciousness-Bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)* appears very attractive and pleasing. When it is manifested only in one individual, it is called Soul (*atma*) or consciousness-in-particular. When it is hidden under the veil of ignorance and is not manifested as existence consciousness-bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)*, a person feels restless and makes efforts of all sorts to get it manifested. If this manifest soul is seen or experienced, pervading equally in all beings and then this very Existence-Consciousness-Bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)* is called by the name *Brahman*, due to its endless expansion.

In order to experience the light of this cosmic consciousness a person has to first see the soul or consciousness-in-particular in his own self i.e. he has to realize his own self. The light of consciousness-in-particular may be manifested in two different ways. One is through association with outer or worldly objects and persons and the other is by shattering the fetters of worldly passions and by realizing the true, eternal bliss in the soul without external support. This very true, eternal bliss, if realized equally in all others without any external support, will be called cosmological consciousness and its realization will be called the realization of *Brahman*. The apprehension of the soul that comes through association with worldly objects and persons is transient. When one is dissociated from them, the consciousness is again hidden behind spiritual ignorance. But if this bliss is manifested without external objects, it will be permanent and everlasting. This is salvation.

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DAY 8

To make one's life successful, one will have to oppose the forces of one's habitual tendencies and personal nature through development of spiritual knowledge and divine insight. Simultaneously, one should strive to (i) develop one's intellectual capabilities (ii) purify one's mind and emotions (iii) control one's senses and bodily needs, (iv) give up one's dependence on material comforts, and (v) give up the fear of facing pain and sufferings, seeking the blessings of God through prayer and worship.

Intellect (*buddhi*) is the power which helps in decision making. Mind is the basic faculty of perceiving (or percept formation) which is completely ignorant and unconcerned as regards the formation of compulsive habitual tendencies of a person. Fetters such as desire, anger, attachment, aversion, prestige, delusion etc., are all reflected in the habitual tendencies of a person and their sum total constitutes the sub-conscious mind (*chitta*). '*Chitta*' is the sub-conscious mind, where hibernate the most powerful ideas and emotions, which affect the human mind and which control the human behavior in the most unpredictable manner. The objects which provide comfort and happiness, affect and dominate the thoughts of a person in a most subtle form. The sub-conscious mind *(chitta)* preserves and protecting the forces of fetters. The forces of both the conscious and sub-conscious mind strongly affect the growth and development of a human body.

The elan-vital or the life-force (*pranashakti*) is strongly affected by one's mental attitude, and it (elan-vital or life-force) circulates very smoothly in the whole physical body under the command of one's spiritual knowledge and divine insight. To the degree one performs his activities and actions with a fully conscious and spiritually alert mind, to the same degree one will digest one's food, and all one's body parts will function in the correct manner. Such a person with a disease-free body is called physically emancipated *(dehamukta)*.

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DAY 9

One has to seriously note that acquired vices and fetters like desire, anger, attachment, aversion, prestige and delusions etc. very severely affect the biochemical balance of the human body. To counter these negative and ignoble attitudes one has to cultivate in one's person noble and divine qualities of God, such as noble and right conduct *(sheel)*, contentment *(santosh)*, dispassion*(vairagya)*, austerity *(tapas)*, endurance *(titiksha)*, friendly kindness *(maitri)*, compassion *(karuna)*, praise for good qualities in others *(mudita)*.

One should always undertake and practise self-study and introspection. Also, the element of personal nature (habitual tendencies) is uniformly present in all persons and to an equal extent, dominates their minds, and compels them to behave and act in an unpredictable manner. But when one is able to establish control and discipline over one's personal nature or habitual tendencies, then one can easily free oneself from the fetters of one's personal nature or habitual tendencies. If other persons fail to establish control over their personal nature or habitual tendencies, then he should be kind towards them and pardon them for their failure or lapse. Thus by developing noble virtues, by patiently watching and witnessing the turbulent restlessness of mind, one will gradually attain mental peace and spiritual bliss of one's inner soul. Though concealed and camouflaged under a thick cover of ignorance, this spiritual bliss is very much present in every person, universally and to the same degree. When this cover is shattered, the inner spiritual bliss at once reveals itself. Therefore, the seeker who shatters this veil of ignorance and who becomes free from the clutches of personal nature, and who enjoys happiness of liberty, should cultivate the noble and divine quality of compassion *(karuna)* to pardon others, who are still in captivity.

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DAY 10

The religious and spiritual way of life demands sustained pursuit, constant practice and committed sincere efforts. The main and essential constituents of the religious and spiritual way of life include, making maximum efforts to achieve freedom from the clutches of the universally potent material manifested nature through devoted and dedicated worship of the supreme power of the universe or Almighty God, who is the only and the sole master of six spiritual powers mentioned earlier. *Bhagwan* (God) fully and completely possesses all the spiritual knowledge. In other words, God has complete knowledge about the inner truth of every object, as to what is apparent and what is inherent or what appears to be beneficial in appearence but proves harmful in the end.

The fact is that the adoption and practice of the religious and spiritual way of life helps a person to realize the most cherished and ultimate spiritual goal of his life. The experienced saints in this field point out that the body of the person who is very sincerely devoted, dedicated and committed to spiritual pursuits, will become conducive to pursue spiritual practices within a period of seven years as if he possesses a spiritually-liberated physically body *(deha-mukta)* and at last he will be bereft of all types of material attractions and inducements. If a person is lethargic and lazy in his religious and spiritual pursuits, he may take many lives and repeated births in this mundane world to realize his divine destination. The more one withdraws from the mundane world and the more one dissociates oneself from worldly pursuits, the more devoted, dedicated and committed one becomes to one's religious and spiritual pursuits.

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DAY 11

Desire for happiness motivates and impels a person to remain enticed in the external world. He is not aware as to where his personal nature or the force of habits and temperament will lead him and what will be their ultimate result. Therefore, every person must cultivate and develop in himself the spiritual knowledge of God and ruminate about His divine capabilities, because God alone is all-knowing and omniscient. All the efforts to understand his personal nature help the person to cultivate spiritual knowledge. It is called spiritual education. All the areas controlled by personal nature constitute the domain of inherent ignorance of which God is fully aware. God represents all the spiritual capabilities and divine virtues, such as to feel equally happy in the happiness of other persons *(maitri)*, to be merciful and kind hearted when other persons are in pain *(karuna)*, to notice, recognize, appreciate and applaud good qualities of other persons *(mudita)*, to intentionally ignore to notice weaknesses and demerits of other persons *(upeksha)* to forgive other persons *(kshama)*, to avoid self-pride and ego, to willingly tolerate inconveniences and hardships, and to avoid all types of conflicts and confrontations in the external world.

The fact is that a person actually becomes very helpless and incapable when his mind is controlled and dominated by his selfish personal nature or the force of habits and temperament. Also, all his fetters are the product of his selfish personal nature. The best and the most desirable course to get rid of them is to cultivate and develop within oneself the often mentioned ten spiritual capabilities of God, which are attainable through meditation and right actions. One has to adopt and sincerely practise both these methods in order to loosen the grip of worldly fetters.

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DAY 12

Personal nature (*swabhava*) is that power or capability which a person acquires by doing actions with conscious deliberate effort, repeatedly with keen interest. Soon by repeated practice, it becomes very easy and natural and becomes his personal capability or personal power. Personal nature (as manifested in the whole universe), as well as the all pervading material nature (manifested in the whole universe), both are basically one and the same, and both have been in existence since time immemorial. No one except God, can control discipline and manage both types of nature. With the help of introspection and meditation, one must mentally recognize and accept the insignificance and worthlessness of one's slavery to one's personal nature. Then one should proceed to dissociate one's mind from one's compulsive, dominating and demanding personal nature (habits and temperament). Thus slowly and determiningly the person recognizes within himself the spiritual powers, by practising meditation and introspection in his solitary, lonely moments, and gets independence from the external material world.

The soul (spirit) within the physical body of every person is the spiritual abode of God, which is also called *Bhagawad-Dham*. God is always and forever present in his spiritual abode, enjoying spiritual bliss. He is most beautiful and extremely attractive. When a person becomes conscious of this fact, he is satisfied within himself and does not loiter to seek external, material pleasures of the mundane world. Thus, with this new start of existence, if this person is able to develop his capabilities of meditation and introspection and thereby activate his inherent potential, he will definitely learn as to how God's universal, all-pervading, omnipotent powers administer and control this vast universe. Such a person will find the spiritual abode of God to be very beautiful and overflowing with divine bliss.

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DAY 13

In order to relish the unique divine experience, it is very essential for the seeker to give-up all his non-essential material yearnings and desires etc., simultaneously developing his capacity to tolerate pain and sufferings owing to denial and non-gratification of his habitual needs, and also giving up his dependence on products and persons of the external world. This is known as austerity *(tapasya)*. The word *tapa* means to temper, to season or to condition. In the Sanskrit language, *tapa* means to undergo and experience some physical suffering, stress and strains; in other words the mind has to undergo some anguish.

To turn one's mind inward and to undertake introspection and meditation, *kriyayoga* or the method of practical activity, engagement, assignment, application and experience, can be put to best use and fruitfully employed. One should sit in an erect posture and observe complete silence. One should focus one's mind on his breathing process (inhaling and exhaling with fully alert and conscious mind). One should not become unnecessarily concerned and worried, if there is any mental lapse in one's breathing process. One should keep on carefully and consciously watching one's breathing process for some time i.e. from five to ten minutes completely dissociating one's mind from the external world, to carefully observe the breathing process. This is how, one starts cultivating, developing and practising *kriyayoga*.

Such a breathing process will make one's mind forget everything else. Such a mind withdraws from its attachments, aversions, desires, anger, insatiable yearnings and is completely and consciously absorbed in the inhaling and exhaling stages of he breathing process done in silence. This is in essence the *kriyayoga*, the art of alert breathing.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

God/Organised whole (*Paramatma*)

God is the name of organized whole of all beings. This very God is manifested in numerous ways in people of all ages starting from one year old child, entangles them to numerous actions through attachment, aversion, ego, delusion etc. This divine dynamism has three characteristics. One is *sattwaguna* noble characterstics, then *rajasguna* in the form of desire, anger etc. inspiring human beings into actions which entice them, and the *tamasguna*, appearing as the darkness of ignorance. In their integrated form this very divine dynamism is called spiritual ignorance *(avidya)*. But God manifested as knowledge in the world of organized whole of infinite and innumerable beings, has a characteristic which is called divine dynamism *(maya)*. It does not mean that God too like a living being is entangled in the fetters. God is also an organiged whole of all things and does not have any entanglements of His own. The entanglement is there only in the individual being who is miserable. God through his drama makes those very living beings play numerous games. But if a person realizes his soul, he will realize all living beings. If a living being gives up the feeling of 'you' and 'I' that occurs in the worldly behavior even for a short while, that living being will not appear to be different from God, the organized whole. When one realizes that God is the soul of the whole universe through meditation, all fetters of attachment, aversion cease to exist. God has infinite power.

By reciting any name of God (Om, Rama, Krishna, Shiva etc,) and concentrating the mind, one can contemplate on the universal consciousness. A person must awaken pure emotions, and see the same God operating everywhere. It is through this very recitation that a person may attain ultimate, eternal bliss. As the person realizes the same cosmological consciousness in all, he becomes free from his narrow self and becomes one with universal or greater consciousness.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) continued ....

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life :

(38)

Without being offended, and, so, without being pained,
One can't live in the world, for one's comforts he's chained;
But, if entangled mind even the least, outsides,
Views and plans against men, true peace little abides.

(39)

For pleasant sensation thinking affection bind,
To kill the painful all the same does hate unkind;
Lost in concerned thinking dwells on self-interest,
Even with worries, mind deluded finds no rest.

(40)

Spring up, then, various views and tearing doubts prevail,
One on conduct and vows dwells much to no avail;
Love of all expressed form and formless even in mind,
One's conscious worldly self, lastly ignorance blind.

(41)

What occupation is this stray where senses and mind,
In ill fatigue to go, or, in ignorance blind;
Right vocation is where they are all controlled,
In soul for eternal missed peace and Bliss to hold.

(42)

All forms of right knowledge live ever to dispel,
Arrayed, of ignorance all forms, which do impel;
For objects of pleasure, for existence outside,
Quick impression but right knowledge all set aside.

(43)

From all entanglement Oh! One can free one's mind,
Not using outward means living in soul refined;
Mere, by spiritual powers developed in one's own,
Seeing reason in pacifying in oneself all alone.

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DAY 15

Kriyayoga is essential for guarding the human mind which is easily distracted by the sensuous attractions and material comforts of the external world. However, as a matter of principle, one should not practise meditation after taking meals, because it is not beneficial. Rather, it is much better to undertake breathing exercises after taking meals as these will help in digesting and absorbing the nutrients of the consumed food, and later on this will help in concentrating the mind on meditation. If a person plans and decides to spend a little time in solitude, he should breathe-in and breathe-out with fully alert and understanding mind, so that his physical body may fully experience the beneficial effects and the influences of his breathing process. But if for some reason at any point of time the seeker finds that his breathing becomes stressful and painful and that his meditation starts developing distraction, he should not practice *kriyayoga*, but sit relaxed in his comfortable and habitual posture and breathe in a casual and normal manner. One should develop the habit to mentally tolerate the inconvenience and the anguish caused by one's disturbed and stressful breathing.

One should develop one's habit and capacity to tolerate any distress and deprivation and thereby inculcate and acquire the spiritual value of austerity. When the seeker's mind starts comprehending, recognizing and understanding, the latent, inner spiritual truths, this strongly and clearly indicates that he has mastered both the art and the science of meditation and introspection.

Even though sitting alone in solitude may be taxing and troublesome, one should go on increasing the time and sit for a longer period of time, tolerating the boredom. By engaging oneself in recitation and chanting some divine names of God in one's meditation schedule, one should control one's fetters, through self-awareness and self-analysis to experience Bliss.

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DAY 16

The seeker must always keep in his mind that by merely having faith and by attending religious discourses, a person can never realize his desired spiritual goals. Faith can only help in the initial stages of spiritual life, that is, in avoiding indulgence in evil deeds, in observing and practising self- discipline, in inculcating humility and in developing peaceful and absorbed meditation. This practice done through faith will render the seeker's mind capable of recognizing and realizing the latent, inner spiritual truths, of comprehending and understanding his personal vices and weaknesses. When his mind is able to recognize and understand its worldly involvements and commitments, it indicates that his mind has become fully active, alert and ready to inspect, analyse and meditate on those mental involvements and commitments. In order to calmly face such situations, even though he has already started to tolerate pain and suffering, he is advised to adopt and practise *kriyayoga*. In other words, he should practise *kriyayoga* when his mind may be compelling him to seek and search his cherished objectives in the external world, and when he does not wanting to do so decides to oppose his mind. At this juncture, out of frustration and protest, his mind starts stifling, strangulating and suppressing his normal breathing process, and the mind starts disturbing all his sense-organs and thereby it starts forcing him to do everything according to its dictates. At that time, very carefully, watchfully and consciously, with full attention and devotion one should start breathing-in and breathing-out, as prescribed by *kriyayoga*. Slowly and gradually with the help of *kriyayoga*, his compulsive nature, impulsive temperament and irresistible habits—all will start losing their strength and will get debilitated, and will allow him to pursue his meditations.

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DAY 17

With the help of meditation, one will come to the conclusion that it is futile to engage one's mind in the objects and persons in the external world, and that its results are going to be harmful sooner or later. The day one gains this knowledge, one will at once realize that one has developed a deep spiritual insight. To divert and disengage one's mind from material pursuits, one requires tolerance of the accruing anguish and inconvenience, but with his spiritual insight one develops it to the required measure and then after some time that mental anguish will automatically vanish. In a similar way, one has to weaken and blunt one's compulsive personal nature (one's impulsive temperament and irresistible habits), by avoiding indulgence in evil deeds, by developing spiritual insight with the help of meditation, by diverting his mind from material pursuits of the world, and by patiently facing and tolerating the pain and suffering resulting from non-gratification of one's habitual needs and by opposing the demands of his personal nature. If one constantly practises this method and adopt this life style, then one will achieve emancipation from the dominion of desires (*kamaloka*), and when one is able to control the forces of sleep, one will surely realise one's cherished spiritual heaven, or *swargaloka*, where one's subtle senses function like that of an innocent child who does not possess any vices and weaknesses of the mundane world.

After finding *swargaloka*, the person is never worried and bothered about seeking spiritual salvation. As a matter of fact, one school of Indian philosophy, called *Mimansa* philosophy, considered,advocated and declared the realisation of *swargaloka* as the ultimate and the only goal of human existence.

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DAY 18

Even when a person has achieved *swargaloka*, he should exercise caution and care. While living in *swargaloka*, which he has achieved by discarding and disdaining the gratification of his desires in the material world, he should be alert to avoid the satisfaction of his desires offered there in a grand way. In such places, where luxuries abound and where the degree of satisfaction is much higher, the seeker should sharpen his mind to become more conscious, careful and alert so that he may become more capable of realizing higher and superior spiritual spheres, instead of falling into the trap of the heavenly comforts of *swargaloka*.

On the path of God realization, the seeker through introspection and meditation realizes that the gratification of sensations of (i) auditory (hearing), (ii) tactile (touch), (iii) visual (seeing), (iv) gestatory (taste) and (v) olfactory (smelling) is completely futile, worthless and short-lived. The only worthwhile, trustworthy and long-lasting power is the spiritual knowledge, which the human mind seeks according to the level of maturity it has attained. When the human being attains this stage nothing can entice and entangle his mind in the mundane external world. This stage of the human mind is referred to as *brahmaloka* or the sphere of spiritual kingdom of *'Lord Brahma'* (one of the three famous spiritual heavenly spheres, governed by Lord *Brahma*, Lord *Vishnu* and Lord *Shiva*).

Even this stage of the human mind clearly indicates that in spite of its excellent progress on the path, it is operating and functioning only at the emotional level or to say that the person is existing only in the sphere of sentiments, and that the person has not as yet attained the spiritual sphere of divine consciousness. In other words the seeker has not as yet cultivated and developed his inherent spiritual knowledge.

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DAY 19

When the seeker's mind has matured to this level, he will realise that it is not proper to seek the gratifications of his unfulfilled worldly desires in *swargaloka* and that there is nor the essentiality of knowing details about this spiritual sphere, where human desires are immediately fulfilled. Under such conditions, when his higher intellectual capabilities have achieved full maturity, he will be able to know the basic, fundamental reality of this universe, which is God in the form of supreme spiritual consciousness (spiritual knowledge) which is all pervasive and omnipresent. When his mind starts comprehending that God in the form of supreme consciousness functions manipulating and administering everything of the entire universe, it is a strong indication that he has attained *Vaikuntha* or has arrived in the spiritual sphere of Lord *Vishnu*. He will experience that whatever the human mind perceives and what ever it knows, it is all the handiwork of the supreme spiritual consciousness. This mental faculty, grants identity and meaning to all types of sensations.

Thus the supreme power in the universe is only the supreme spiritual consciousness, or Almighty God. The personal consciousness in the human mind is a part and parcel of the supreme spiritual consciousness. All the senses of a human being become active and alert and start functioning at the optimum level, when his conscious mind energises them and when it makes them dynamic. Divine consciousness is one attribute of the supreme power, along with two other attributes, i.e. eternal reality and matchless bliss *(sat-chit-ananda)*. The whole field of objective, scientific research is in the domain of *sat-chit-ananda*. Supreme spiritual consciousness deduces the universal scientific principles to explain the phenomenal world of the manifested universal material nature.

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DAY 20

Human intellect has the capability to distinguish and differentiate. This clearly puts forth the difference between the 'object' and the 'subject'; or there is an entity which is known and there is another different entity which is the knower. This situation or awareness inspired the human mind to postulate the concept of duality *(dwaitvada)*. When the human mind dissociated itself from the concept of duality, it discovered that beyond the *vishnuloka*, there is another distinct spiritual sphere called *shivloka*. During the course of time when the human mind got tired of recognizing and acknowledging the existence of the multitude of varied entities in *vishnuloka*, it raised a very valid and potent query : when there is only one fundamental, universal power which controls and governs both the spiritual and the material worlds, why bother about all the various different entities of the universe ? Instead, the best option for the human mind is to consciously and wilfully disengage itself from all the concerns and claims of the external world. Just as the mind of a person in sound sleep does not notice anything of the external world, in the same manner the seeker's mind should not notice anything of the external world. Such meditation is equivalent to the peaceful and absorbed meditation of Lord *Shiva*. Such an emancipated mental state indicates that there is one more distinct sphere of the divine world where there is much more spiritual bliss and contentment, world known as *shivloka*.

The seeker may, through meditation, introspection, austerity etc., come across in the path the various spiritual hemispheres. But he is strongly advised to abstain from their privileges and perks offered to him, as his senses etc. might be tempted to retrace the progressive steps and once again slip back into the charms of the external world. At this juncture, he should absolve his mind of all these spheres to move ahead to attain his supreme goal of salvation *(mukti)*.

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DAY 21 (3rd weekend)

Living Being *(Jiva)*

Jiva means any living being who can respire. But respiration is not possible without consciousness and knowledge. Knowledge here means respiration with understanding. This develops a feeling of living being, of knowledge and action. Also, this living being is not alone and has the company of innumerable other living beings to interact with. Perceived by one another, they experience pain and pleasure because of which wrong tendencies and fetters like attachment, aversion, desire, anger etc., flow like waves of water all the time in a living being. When these impulses are not aroused, fetters of attachment etc. remain dormant and keep the living beings alive and do not allow them to perish. Thus a living being is one who is a unit of this world manifested as one unit of an integral community of infinite number of living beings. He is not always in the same state. Pain or sorrow always confront him. One who takes birth to dispel pain must die one day. In this way, a living being will never be free from the cycle of life and death, and the search by a living being for a solution to this pain will never end until he realizes God.

If a living being realizes this cosmological consciousness or God, and for that, after understanding the nature of his fetters, making right efforts energetically, he will first of all escape from all the fetters of spiritual ignorance, ego, delusion, aversion etc. that develop in this community of infinite living beings manifested as the world, and will attain steadfastness by experiencing the cosmological consciousness within his soul manifested as knowledge and his period of flow in the world will come to an end. Having thus realised peace and bliss within himself, the seeker will be spared from the cycles of birth and death.

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DAY 22

The best method to achieve freedom from all these alluring spiritual spheres *(divine lokas)* is by educating and enlightening one's mind with the help of spiritual consciousness, suggesting the futility of making stopovers to enjoy the offerings of these spheres, and by moving ahead. Let every event and phenomenon appear and disappear, without any interruption and intervention like rising and falling waves. When a person's mind experiences the flashes of Divine Consciousness like the rise and falling of waves, this mental state indicates that he has started experiencing Divine Consciousness during each and every moment of his existence. Hindu religious philosophers call this mental state as the supreme formula of spiritual salvation (*taraka mantra*),which helps the seeker to successfully travel across the ocean of the mundane existence.

The limitless supreme spiritual consciousness, known as God, is all pervading and omni-present but sometimes it temporarily becomes inactive. Whenever, the supreme spiritual consciousness temporarily becomes inactive even for a moment, the chance is grabbed by divine dynamism *(maya)* to create the manifested material world with all its temptations. As soon as the supreme spiritual consciousness or God, again resumes its normal activities; it annihilates all the creations of *maya*. The supreme spiritual consciousness or God is continuously and constantly enacting this divine drama within every object and event or the universe. This divine drama is only understood by a person, when he starts regarding and treating both pleasure and pain in a balanced and equal manner in all situations, in other words, when his mind does not feel affected and agitated in situations of both pleasures and pain. Thus a person should pass through and outlive the periods of pleasure and pain, witnessing both as a non-participating passive and neutral observer *sakshibhav*, to keep his supreme spiritual consciousness active and alert during each and every moment of his existence. This is *nirvana* or *moksha* or *parampada* the ultimate salvation.

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DAY 23

Human beings, as a rule, develop so much attachment to this mundane world, that whenever a person is about to die, he does not want to quit this world. As a matter of fact a human being feels himself alive and existing, when he is in the midst of other living beings of the world. However, even after quitting the company of other living beings, when a person continues experiencing the fact of his existence with the help of his inner spiritual knowledge, he does not need the support of the external world and its living beings. He is able to remain calm, stable and unperturbed. Such a mental state strongly indicates that his mind has attained the goal of spiritual salvation or *mukti*. Many a time, his mind fails to experience its existence with the help of its inherent knowledge, but even then, his mind remains calm and unperturbed during all types of sensual experiences and constantly upholds the noble feelings of human friendship and fellowship, and dedicatedly, and devotedly meditates on the eternal divine reality of the universe. Such a mental state depicts his progressive spiritual pilgrimage through the various spiritual spheres, described earlier. The main objective of adopting and pursuing the path of inner, spiritual life is that the person may experience in advance the anguish of parting with the mundane world during his present life, and that thus, later, he will not be afraid of his death.

Though all the Hindu religious scriptures support and uphold the permanence of the soul, a person can develop trust only when he personally experiences it. As a matter of fact consciousness itself is human soul, and 'Universal Consciousness' (or God) is always active and existing within the human soul all the time. The person who devotedly and dedicatedly adopts and pursues the spiritual life, attains the unruffled and everlasting divine peace of the awakened or the conscious soul.

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DAY 24

The habitual tendencies and temperamental compulsions give birth to worldly fetters which conceal and camouflage all the spiritual elements of the human soul, and a person dominated by them is always afraid of dying and death. Such a person does not understand the philosophical implications of *karmayoga*, *bhaktiyoga* and *gyanayoga*, because his mind is incapacitated and overpowered by desires, anger or other similar fetters generated by his personal nature, his habitual and temperamental demands and their gratifications.

The word '*yoga*' means 'to join' or 'to involve the mind.' When the mind involves itself in the performance of actions or *karma*, then it is called *karamyoga*. When the mind involves itself in the activities of inhaling and exhaling of the breathing process, it is known as *kriyayoga*. In this very manner, when the mind gets involved in the process of 'attention and concentration' or in other words, when the mind is devoted to examining, exploring and understanding a certain idea or topic and thereby to call out the concealed, covert and inner meaning of the idea, or truth of the topic, then it is referred as *dhyanayoga*. When one gradually develops the habit to control, concentrate and devote one's mind to a great extent, then through *dhyanayoga* and *kriyayoga,* he will be able to withdraw one's mind from the external world, and then gather and store all one's vital energy within his body, to experience a lot of contentment, comfort and happiness devoid of pain and suffering. When one withdraws one's mind from the external world during meditation voluntarily, with one's mind fully active and alert, then one will experience rich insights and spiritual awakening instead of destruction and the like. Even in death, it is only withdrawal from the external world, just as a person withdraws from the external world during sleep and meditation.

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DAY 25

The seers of yore suggest experiencing death during current life, to dispel any agitation, nervousness, worries, doubts, fear etc. in the mind of the seeker when death approaches him. Experiencing death during the current life, 'implies' giving up of all mundane desires and worldly pursuits during the present life, regarding their benefits, fruits and rewards as insignificant and useless, and extricating his mind from the enticements of the external world. In a way, this amounts to dying and death. When he withdraws his mind from the external world as if he is dead and his mind is no more interested in the world, at this point his personal nature and force of habit will motivate and push his mind again and again into the external mundane world. Under such circumstances, he should alert his intellect, seek its wise control and treat the rewards and benefits of the mundane world as useless and futile. This is the essential objective of *dhyanayoga* or meditation : to warn the seeker. If he keeps his mind watchful and proceeds on, it indicates that he has realized the spiritual sphere of *brahmaloka*, because his mind is meditating about the manifest reality. Such meditation enables him to enter another higher spiritual sphere or *devaloka*. When his meditation proceeds in this right manner, his mind is absolved from the fear of death and the worries that accompany it.

After death, there is no such thing as total annihilation or complete dissolution of the soul. The soul never dies. The soul only travels like a tourist, visiting and passing through the various spiritual spheres, such as the *swargaloka*. Only a person, who remains totally enticed to the world at the time of death, will be afraid of quitting this world. Also the fact that all actions performed by a person in the world do produce their respective results, rewards and punishments, should always be kept in mind by the seeker while embarking upon any action.

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DAY 26

As long as a person does not lead a pure and noble life, he will not be able to achieve ideal and rich rewards. His personal nature or the force of habit dominates his life, through its powerful elements (worldly fetters) such as desire, anger, greed, delusion, etc. and enslaves him. They provide very limited and false material comforts and finally result only in anguish and pain, which far exceeds the happiness and contentment received from them. One has to activate his discriminatory intellectual capabilities to assess the comparative value and significance of the worldly material objects, with the help of meditation and introspection. This process of activating intellectual capability is called *gyanayoga*, which helps in getting rid of fetters like habitual compulsions, i.e. lust and anger. This mental stage will be regarded as the seeker's initial step towards liberation or *mukti*. His final and complete liberation will be achieved when he is able to live through all types of pain and sufferings without any reaction whatsoever, just observing them as a passive, neutral witness, till the pains and sufferings automatically dissolve and disappear. The complete, ultimate spiritual salvation implies that the seeker's mind has become capable of stoutly resisting and opposing the forces of his habitual temptations for the mundane wold and that his mind has developed the capability to tolerate the pain and anguish caused by the deprivation and non-gratification of his habitual temptations. When his mind is free from all the fetters and vices, the person will start experiencing an inner bliss.

In this manner, when a person understands the meaning of spiritual salvation or *mukti* and how to achieve spiritual bliss, through the different paths viz. path of action (*karmayoga*), committed concentration (*kriyayoga*) and meditation (*dhyanayoga*), then for him there is no such thing as death and he will not be afraid of death.

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DAY 27

As a matter of fact, all human behaviour, which is controlled and dominated by the personal nature and the forces of habit of the person, is the result of his inherent ignorance, his short-sightedness and his self-deception. When he develops insight and knowledge in his personal nature and his habitual addictions with the help of deep and thorough self-analysis, this self- knowledge is called *vidya* or mental cultivation and self- awareness. This self-awareness and spiritual insight is very clearly discernible and present to the maximum level in Almighty God. A human being can slowly and gradually develop some spiritual insight by dedicatedly worshipping and through devoted commitment to God. In other words, a person will develop godly insight and spiritual awareness, slowly and gradually in course of time with the help of meditation, self-analysis and intellectual cultivation *(buddhiyoga)*, and by seeking the blessings of God through self-surrender and religious worship. That is why it is essential to culivate and practise self-discipline protecting oneself with committed faith and religious conviction from all the actions. This is called religious or spiritual life.

After mental alertness and watchfulness, the second best friend of the person is his fortitude *(veerya)*, which in *Sanskrit* language means courage to face a foe bravely when confronted, to achieve victory. Demerits and vices such as excessive desires, anger, greed, lust, jealousy, etc., which motivate a person to commit and indulge in evil actions which are deadly enemies of religious and spiritual life, and which if not checked, overpower him.

In essence, the seeker has to inculcate in him and nurture the ten divine qualities repeatedly referred to earlier, so that he may lead an effective and adorable life in society, worshipping and adoring God, in his pursuit of salvation.

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DAY 28 (4th Weekend)

God/Perfect Enlightened Soul *(Bhagwan)*

God or Perfect Enlightened Soul means a conscious person having six powers or bhagas or energy (*aishwarya*) : (i) knowledge of spiritual science (*vidya*), (ii) understanding the nature of spiritual ignorance *(avidya)* fully, (iii) knowledge of consequences of actions done in present life and responsible for the rebirth of a human being, (iv) knowledge of the present consequences of the actions of previous birth, which led a person to the present condition, birth or state of being, (v) knowledge of right conduct (*dharma*), i.e. the kind of life through which a person conducts himself so that he can have freedom from fetters to attain salvation and ultimate bliss, and (vi) knowledge of salvation in oneself. This salvation means freedom from fetters. It is God alone who knows Himself fully. He directly reveals the path for others to follow.

At some time God manifests Himself in this world and inspires people directly towards the path of salvation by Himself becoming a model to show the way to others. "As I conduct Myself, so can you", thus inspiring His devotees and meditators. He does not let them be disheartened. Even when they are absent, He inspires His devotees and meditators in their search for salvation through meditation. When a sincere devotee or meditator, who endures pain, turning away from all wrong things, searches for the right faith through concentrated meditation, analyses how God manifested in the human form would have conducted Himself, he will surely receive the divine command from God. Such a saint or devotee will surely cross the ocean of the world (*bhavsagar*) understanding the meaning of all Vedas and the deep verses of right faith.

Thus, God (Bhagawan) has shown the path of right faith (dharma), and any human being who adopts this path or right faith ultimately attains supreme salvation from this universe *(mukti)*.

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Day 28 (4th Weekened) Continued...
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(44)

All is not in power, O! master of his mind,
To control right to act and live blest peace to find;
Driven by what you like to do wilful all act,
Move all elemental force, the same, by its impact.

(45)

Your prize will be too great to be undone by all,
In spiritually weak ones you be, but, too strong to fall;
See, by universal force to act how men are strained,
Live with insight, in strength by right meditation gained.

(46)

Poor fellow! seek pleasures, weak in right intellect,
Moved by freak of weak mind lives wrong to wrong effect;
One being in capacity, seeing ones for well-being weak,
Not moves impulse as drives, inspires heart; right all seeks.

(47)

Moved by pain and influenced by other's conduct mind,
Looks at things to decide in sentiment unkind.
In partial prejudiced being truth, as is one in all,
Does not reveal itself, by ill-force right reason fall.

(48)

Oneself being delivered from all influence; from pain,
Through peep-hole of insight look at world, truth is plain;
Know the world with its beings, as they are, where being placed,
And 'why they do things wrong'? Comes to light cause well-traced.

(49)

Suffers, one, from disease, from weather inclement,
So, helpless, in old age, living inconvenient;
Why? Out of nobility, not one learns to endure,
Pains, from whatever source they come, living but pure.

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DAY 29

The forces of habit and personal nature entangle and entice the human mind through two means : (1) through providing knowledge about the external material world and their utility and through (2) the inherent force of that knowledge, implying attraction, attachment, enticement of mind to worldly material comforts about which it gained knowledge. The human mind then develops desires and begins to repeatedly enjoy the worldly material comforts. When these desires are not fulfilled, the person feels frustrated, mentally agitated and his mental alertness and alacrity are distorted. The forces which enslave the human mind to the external, material world are called insatiable passions *(trishna)*.

By devoting some time to the study of religious scriptures, or by attending sermons or through meditation *trishna* can not be debilitated or demolished, as one's momentary understanding of these truths cannot be effective for long. Let us suppose that a person has intellectually grasped through knowledge that there is no gain in gratifying his habits and the demands of his personal nature. But this is quite insufficient and so he has to further motivate and inspire his mind through meditation to learn and practise self-discipline to a great and desirable extent in order to combat and control the gratification, demands of his habits and forces of his personal nature. It presupposes self-discipline, and perfect control over his senses and mind.

Till one is able to inculcate and acquire the habit of self-discipline, one should learn to concentrate one's mind as well as tolerate the inconveniences caused by austerity and the demands of self-discipline. To achieve this objective, one should make sustained efforts to avoid evil actions in the world, control one's daily activities, remain mentally alert, maintain fortitude and practise introspection and analysis of all one's actions.

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DAY 30

Wherever in the external world a person finds attractive objects and persons who can gratify his habits and satisfy his personal nature, they will entangle and entice his mind. His breathing will become abnormal and at times difficult, the frequent occurrence of stressful breathing can damage his health and cause even neurological tension, cardiac stress, gastro-intestinal disturbance etc. rendering peaceful meditation difficult. At this juncture, the seeker should slowly try *karmayoga* and *kriyayoga* persistently to debilitate and eradicate these forces every moment, and he will be successful in his efforts.

The forces of habit (or personal nature) enslave and entice the person at the following four levels ; (a) body level (b) mental level (c) subconscious level and (d) sentimental level or affecting perception level. At the first level, the forces of habit entice the person by showing as to how the body may have to face pleasure or pain (if habits are gratified or denied gratification). At the second level, the forces of habit assume the form of desire, anger etc. and compel the person to get entangled in the external, material world and thereby achieve some worldly status. At the third level, the forces of habit entice the person by compelling him to ruminate about the persons and objects of the external world, which are the sources of pleasure or pain. At the fourth level, the forces of habit entice the person through actual experience of pleasure or pain and thereby force him to get entangled in the external material world.

Thus there are these four levels, i.e. body, mind, subconscious and sentimental, where the force of habit entice and entrap the person. Every person can himself witness his habitual enslavement at these four levels, during everyday routine activities, provided his mind remains fully alert and watchful.

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MAY

Bhaktiyoga

Bhaktiyoga may be simply understood as devotion to a personal God. It is the simple faith that there exists a supreme power which one imagines to have a certain form and name according to one's preference or belief. Such a personal God is called *ishta devata*. Chanting the sacred names of God, going to places of worship and pilgrimage, offering flowers and eatables, giving alms to the needy, doing service to saints and devotees etc are some of the common practices of *bhaktiyoga*. *Nama sankirtan* or singing the praise of God is another favourite mode of expressing devotion. When such practices are carried out over a period of time devotion to one's chosen God increases and one becomes filled with thoughts of God and constantly thinks of ways of pleasing Him. This is the ripe time to meditate on one's *ishta devata*. One learns to visualize Him in one's heart, talk to Him, beg Him to purify one's mind and grant His vision *(darshan)*. Such a person becomes saturated with the love of God and starts viewing everything and everyone as the glorious manifestation of his chosen God. All his sense organs and his mind are fully directed towards God alone. Thus sincere devotion can lead to deep meditation.

Editor

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Day 1



MAY

In due course of time, the forces of habit become so powerful and strong that these can be debilitated only with the knowledge and practice of *karmayoga* and *kriyayoga* as enunciated by Almighty God, in a sincere and dedicated manner. One does not achieve significant success in spiritual path just by theoretically knowing that the path of habitual gratifications and satisfaction of personal nature always ends in pain and suffering.

The force of habit depends on desire. Habit and desire function together in the company of each other. So first of all, while performing any action, one's mind must get rid of all desires for worldly comforts (*kamaloka*), which are all the time engulfing and entangling his mind. In doing so, one will automatically adopt and practise '*nishkama karma*' of *karmayoga* described in the *Gita*. Here one should be clear about *nishkama karma*, that it does not prevent the person to carry on with the socially approved desires, necessary for leading a smooth religious life. It entails shunning off futile and meaningless desires. Also, attending to one thing at a time is the basic principle of *karmayoga*, so one should strictly devote his mind to the activity he is performing.

In the *Sanskrit* language, the word 'Arjuna' means to adopt, cultivate and practise the path of '*dharma*' or the path of religion, and signifies the person who motivates his mind to pursue the path of religion, and religious life. When the seeker adopts the path of religion, in course of time, he will realize the truths of his inner spirit or soul. When he sincerely adopts the path of religion and when his mind develops divine knowledge, this divine knowledge will guide and govern his chariot of worldly desires, just as Lord Krishna guided and governed the chariot of Arjuna in the great war of *Mahabharata*. Thus, when one, through constant practice, is able to perform one's actions very carefully, consciously, with one pointed concentration without any extraneous desires not related to the activity one is engaged in, one is successful in *nishkamkarma*, and one's work becomes an act of worship. With mental alertness and alacrity one will soon develop the capability of *samadhi*.

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DAY 2

The basic fact is that one should understand the full meanings of all the religious books and spiritual sermons or *satsang* (holy company), and implement their teachings in one's own life. Unless one practises in one's own life, one will only superficially understand and grasp the inherent meaning of those religious and spiritual books, and one will not fully enlighten oneself with the great spiritual truths that are lying hidden in the language of those philosophical books or saints.

Attaching the mind with one pointed concentration in the activity one is performing is called *yoga*. *Karma yoga* thus calls for full devotion and the dedication in the activity in hand, avoiding the negative vices (such as anger and futile desires etc.) intelligently and with courage. When certain desires are not gratified for some time, these desires get settled in the sub-conscious mind or *'chitta'*, in the form of subtle impressions (*sukshmasanskaras*) and repeatedly go on reminding the person about the unfulfilled desires. This mental state of the person is called *ragachitta* or the sentiment of attachment. Similarly, when memories of objects which caused pain and suffering in the past settle down in the sub-conscious mind in the form of subtle impressions, the mental state of the person is referred to as *dweshachitta* or the sentiment of aversion. When both *ragachitta* and *dweshachitta* are denied gratification, the person experiences a lot of anxiety and worry, and he keeps brooding about those objects which has produced attachment or aversion, this mental state is known as *mohachitta*. One has to control the undercurrents of these different phases of one's sub-conscious mind, even while performing one's routine, daily life duties, with his intellectual capabilities and conscious efforts.

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DAY 3

One needs to successfully practise first *gyanayoga* and then *kriyayoga*, to first acquaint oneself with the worthlessness of the ephemeral pleasure of the worldly pursuits, and then to subjugate the forces of habit and personal nature which prompt the mind to be enticed by them. When the practice of both these Yogas is keenly pursued by the seeker, gradually his mind is purified with the help of correct breathing.

For the best results, meditation should be practised about six hours after one has taken one's meals and the food has almost digested. *Kriyayoga* may be done immediately after taking food as it helps in the digestion of food and will not produce any evil effect on the body, rather it may cure any negative effects already existing in the body of the seeker. For the practice of *kriyayoga*, one should sit down all alone at any solitary place, and intelligently observe one's breathing process, by keeping mind fully alert and conscious of the breathing process. This process of inhaling and exhaling is alled 'Pranapan'. *Kriyayoga* helps the person to develop the habit of devoting and spending equal duration of time, during *prana* and *apana* stages of the breathing process. This is the main goal and objective of *kriyayoga*.

The breath which one takes carelessly and casually, is uneven, unstable and abnormal because it is controlled by the tensions of one's life situations and habitual forces. Such breath indicates lethargy, thoughts of discrimination and differentiation against others or feelings of attachment, aversion, hostility, stifling, stress, tension, anxiety etc. and is sure to produce ill-health in course of time. Further, with repeated and persistent careless breathing, habitual forces and personal nature will get stronger and deep rooted.

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DAY 4

It is a known fact that every action is learnt only through persistent repetition and revision. *Kriyayoga* can also be learnt and cultivated like any other activity. There is not much to learn, only one has to breathe in (inhale) and breathe out (exhale) through one's nose with awareness and caution. That is all. Inhaling and exhaling is an instinctive natural activity and does not require any special knowledge or learning to perform. The only thing required is to keep the mind devoted and concentrated in the act of breathing, which is called 'mindfulness' *(smriti)*. In the Bhagavad Gita, *kriyayoga* has been mentioned in alternate words, called *prana apana samikaran*, or in other words it is the technique to equalize the two stages of *prana* and *apana* of the breathing process.

Initially one can start practising *kriyayoga* for five to ten minutes and gradually increase it. One should be fully alert in the process of breathing, i.e. how much time is involved in the alternate activities of inhaling and exhaling, whether the breath is of long duration or of short duration. One should neither stop breathing, nor try to shorten one's breath, if it is of long duration and vice-versa, keeping one's mind alert and watchful during the process.

The practice of *kriyayoga* demands one to sit down at a designated place in a comfortable posture after finishing meals and other responsibilities, not thinking and ruminating about any other thing or event. The forces of habit and personal nature being very powerful affect one's breathing process, through engagement of one's mind in memories of emotions of various kinds: desire for power, prestige, prejudices, complaints etc. which vitiate his normal breathing process. Even under such conditions one should keep one's mind fully focused on one's breathing process i.e. '*prana*' and '*apana*'.

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DAY 5

In the initial stage of *kriyayoga*, first of all the seeker should focus his mind on the anatomy of his body, i.e. on the different organs, such as stomach, liver, pancreas, heart, lungs, kidneys, large intestine, small intestine etc. One should think about these organs one by one and draw a mental sketch when one is inhaling and exhaling, concentrating his mental energy and focusing his mind on his breathing process and the various organs inside his body. This is recognized as *kayayoga*, i.e. attachment of the mind with the body, and will help him to focus his mind on the inner environment of one's body. But here one should be careful and conscious not to meditate too long about the internal organs, instead restrict one's *kayayoga* to a short period so that one's practice of *kriyayoga* is not disturbed in the least. The seeker must maintain the basic rules of *kriyayoga*, and keep his mind fully focused on the process of inhaling and exhaling, also fighting the forces of habit and personal nature, which keep the mind scattered in the external world. Finally, his mind will get liberated from his fetters, when he continues his fight against the forces of habit and personal nature.

In this manner for practice of *kriyayoga*, one must keep one's mind consistently and persistently, fully conscious, alert and watchful. One should also develop the habit of keeping awake with conscious effort. One can get enough time to practice *kriyayoga* during the day after taking lunch or after dinner at night. One should breathe in and breathe out through the nostrils, while keeping one's mouth shut, and during this process also focus one's mind on all one's bodily organs, one by one in their spatial order; avoiding long durations of focusing on them, without disturbing one's *kriyayoga*.

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DAY 6

Now begins the description of the second part of kriyayoga. One has spent almost half the time in focusing one's mind on one's body parts while breathing with conscious and careful mind. Now one should not focus his mind on the body parts, but instead devote and dedicate one's mind only to the performance of *kriyayoga*, with one's mind fully focused on the breathing process, inhaling and exhaling. As long as one practises *kriyayoga*, he has to concentrate and unite one's mind with the breathing activity. He must stop all one's extraneous thoughts and habitual inner tendencies such as desire, and anger. When one starts ignoring and neglecting one's personal nature and the forces of habit, these will start dissolving and disappearing from one's mind automatically.

The essence is that one has only one mind and it can observe and concentrate only on one thing at a time. The personal nature and habitual tendencies will create hurdles in the form of vices, emotions, desires, sleep etc., in the first stage, and in its second stage of *kriyayoga* one's inner emotions, personal attitude, doubt, suspicion, desire, anger, lassitude and temptation for sleep etc., will disrupt the process. One has to keep on executing *kriyayoga* with devotion, dedication and commitment facing all odds.

The third place, where personal nature and forces of habit remain hidden and hibernate, is the region of the sub-conscious mind *(chitta)*, which is classified into three types : (i) *ragachitta*, the region of the sub-conscious mind where emotions of attachment and affections are entrenched (ii) *dweshachitta*, the region of the sub-conscious mind where the emotions of aversion and hatred are entrenched and (iii) *mohachitta*, the region of the sub-conscious mind where the emotions of imagined fears and delusions are entrenched ; All these undercurrents take place in some deeper levels of one's mind, or in the region of the sub-conscious mind.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Divine dyanamism *(Maya)*

The word '*maya*' is constituted of only two letters— 'ma' and 'ya'. The letter 'ma' indicates prohibition, 'ya' means 'which' i.e. *maya* is that which is not fit for any expression. This is elusive *maya*. Divine dynamism or *maya* is that power which appears to be doing or getting things done. It does not appear in one particular form. It is there in a child when he is born and flows in it till old age. It creates the body, increases it and then decreases and destroys it. All this appears to be happening in a continuous flow, though not so factually, and whoever is seen in a particular form is only for that moment. A moment or later, the scene changes. Nothing is seen as 'existing' and also as 'not-existing'. Both 'existence' and 'non-existence' are not there, so it is beyond description *(anirvachaniya)*, definition and proof. Only this much is true that this divine dynamism is manifested as *sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Alongwith this divine dynamism, God as knowledge *(jnana)* as knowing and deep knowledge *(vijnana)* as understanding, goes along and manifests these three gunas. Taking refuge in God *(sarnagati)* means contemplation of knowledge alone and ignoring all the three gunas or elements of divine dynamism.

This divine dynamism established in a living being *(jiva)* as a veil on his soul is also known as spiritual ignorance *(avidya or ajnana)*, also has the same three gunas—*sattwa*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The composite whole of all living beings interlocked in one another is called God *(Paramatma)*. The distinguished power of God which is established in all living-beings and driving them all and through its *gunas* is called divine dynamism *(maya)*. That is why it is given the title of God. Whosoever escapes from his spiritual ignorance *(avidya)* and the universal divine dynamism of God *(maya)* and whosoever merges himself in His pure form, the cosmological consciousness *(Brahman)*, he will be known to have attained supreme salvation.

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DAY 8

If the seeker's mind gets involved, enticed and entangled in the emotions generated by these types of chittas (*raga, dwesha* and *moha*) or in any other thoughts and forces related to them, *ragachitta*, *dweshachitta* and *mohachitta*, the inhaling and exhaling of his breathing process will get disrupted and destabilised and his mind will not be able to concentrate on the breathing process. Under such situation, if one is able to overcome and overpower the emotional forces hibernating in these three types of *chittas* of one's sub-conscious mind with the help of *kriyayoga* and if one is able to continue focusing and concentrating one's mind on one's breathing process with sincere and committed efforts, with the passage of time and gradually one's sub-conscious mind will get fully emancipated from the effects of these *chittas*.

The fourth level at which the worldly fetters of one's personal nature and his habits influence and obstruct one's breathing process is the mental perception of pain and pleasure. One has to overcome and cross-over this hurdle with sincere, constant, consistent and committed practice of *kriyayoga*. One will have to keep one's mind fully focused and concentrated on one's breathing process to such an extent that one's mind stops noticing pleasure, and that it starts ignoring all the temptations of pleasure, and that it pursues the practice of *kriyayoga* with full devotion and dedication. When one stops bothering and worrying about all one's sufferings and instead keeps the mind focused and concentrated on one's breathing process of inhaling and exhaling, one acquires both mental and moral strength to completely dominate and uproot the forces of one's personal nature and habits.

Forces of habit thus enslave a person at these four levels : i.e. the physical level, the mental level, the sub-conscious level and the affecting perceptive level, which are to be debilitated at these levels through *kriyayoga*, as their destruction is not possible through *gyanayoga* or *karmayoga*.

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DAY 9

Along with the previously mentioned committed efforts, it is also essential to undertake self study i.e. one should know and understand one's own inner self with one's spiritual eye. One should also try to understand other persons with the help of one's self knowledge. This will enable him to see the actions of other people generated by their forces of habit in their proper perspective, and one will develop mercy and forgiveness for them, besides being fair and proper in one's behaviour towards them. This is called devotion and dedication to God who has manifested in the form of living beings and other creations of the universe.

It must be always be borne in mind that the whole of the manifested existence is organized and planned in a set systematic design and that everything of the whole universe is inter-connected, inter-related and inter-dependent. Nothing can exist in isolation or independently. Human beings are social animals and depend on one another to fulfil and gratify their inter-personal needs and necessities. It is true that one may be praying and worshipping all alone, in loneliness, but if he does not bother about others and their well being, then that style of life is not proper and praiseworthy, because life becomes meaningful and enjoyable in the company of other human beings. One will have to remain mentally active alert and cautious, during the happiness of other persons, shunning one's self- centredness and ego. In earlier times such a cultured and respected person was referred as *arya*. In this manner, with the help of *Karmayoga*. *Gyanayoga* and *Kriyayoga*, one will have to debilitate, demolish and destroy all the forces of habit and understand the mysteries of one's personal nature and the universal nature, with one's consistent and constant efforts. With the passage of time, one will experience spiritual ecstasy while living, and will not suffer old age or be afraid of death.

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DAY 10

In the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagwan Krishna tells Arjuna that whatever is learnt about the external world with the help of the sense organs is transitory and temporary and such knowledge is not dependable and as such not worth seeking, worth searching and worth acquiring. Bhagwan Krishna further admonishes Arjuna to banish from his mind all the pains and pleasures, which are the result of his sensual perceptions and advises him to renounce all the gratifications of his senses because all the sensual pains are transitory and temporary.

The relationship between the material world and the bodily sense organs never remains the same, and hence the gratification of the senses never generates a permanent and ever-lasting happiness and contentment. One should thus tolerate the pain and suffering caused by the denial of sensual gratification, without making any sustained and serious efforts to avoid or postpone such pain and suffering and their resultant mental tensions and worries. One should cope with increasing levels of such pain and suffering without complaining about or demonstrating against any mundane factors and forces. Gradually with the passage of time, all the pain and suffering caused by the denial and deprivation of sensual gratification will automatically disappear. One should, therefore, fortify and strengthen one's mind to such an extent that it should not get affected by the pain and suffering caused by the denial and deprivation of sensual gratifications, and that thereby it should not get restless, unsettled, anxious and worried. Such a mental attitude is denoted by the word *titiksha*, meaning to maintain mental peace and poise and to patiently endure pain and suffering confronted by the mind without making any hue and cry and protests and without indulging in improper actions to ward off them.

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DAY 11

Instead of being afraid or anxious during the time of pain and suffering, one should make one's mind active and alert to study, examine and analyse the sources of pain and suffering and objectively assess if this can prove fatal and destroy his very existence and life. One should carefully and very consciously keep this point in his mental focus. Thus, it becomes imperative that one should develop the habit to tolerate some pain and suffering and should not become extra concerned and overworried about it, and that one should not remonstrate, demonstrate and protest, and that one should not make plans and schemes to ward off, prevent or postpone such pain and suffering. All these efforts have been summed up in the Hindi language word *titiksha*.

Pain and suffering can be classified into three types: (1) Pain and suffering caused by some bodily illness or injury ; (2) Pain and suffering caused by climatic and geographic conditions (uncontrollable and unpredictable natural calamities, which are inflicted by supernatural forces, or some geographic, atmospheric and seasonal upheavals, beyond human control; (3) pain and suffering experienced by one's mind. These three types of pains and sufferings are experienced by each and every human being in life so intensely that he is unable to discharge his responsibilities efficiently.

To achieve spiritual rewards, one has to realise one's inner divine truths leading a spiritual life full of devotion and dedication. The knowledge concerning the divine reality demands seven attributes or characteristics in the seeker, which are (i) mental alertness *(smriti)* (ii) courage and fortitude *(veerya)* (iii) attentiveness and concentration *(dhyana)* (iv) search for divine truth *(mimansa)*, (v) satisfaction and contentment *(prasanata)* (vi) sincerity and commitment *(preeti)* and (vii) carefree attitude *(nischintata)*.

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DAY 12

The best solution to outlive the time of mental distress and agitation (which is due to some suffering or due to deprivation and denial of some mundane comfort) is by investigating the cause of the mental distress and agitation with the help of meditation, without making any overt protest. In other words, during the time of adversity, one should not indulge in hue and cry. Instead, one should maintain his mental peace and poise. One should practise to bravely tolerate that pain and suffering, and should also go on increasing his level of tolerance. This mental attitude is called *titiksha*. This very truth was explained by Lord Krishna to Arjuna, that all pains and sufferings, as well as the inflictions of hot and cold weather, are the products of sensual perceptions and personal temptations, and that all such perceptive experiences are transitory and temporary. Hence, He advised *Arjuna* to tolerate them and not to let his mind get agitated.

It is true that there are many religious approaches, like making donations for food, clothes and shelter to the poor, serving others in different ways etc. which will ensure the spiritual well-being of a person. But if one wants to liberate himself from the worldly tangles and tussles, if one wants to get rid of the fetters, as well as from the many conflicts and confrontations, the best religious approach is to tolerate pains and sufferings without any adverse reactions and mental anguish and tension.

Always remember that every person in the world has to undergo pains and sufferings. First, one should try to find the causes of the pains and sufferings, then to introspect and analyse in meditation the methods of betterment as well as to tolerate the pain and suffering for one's larger welfare and well-being.

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DAY 13

Suffering is the prime factor which does not let the intellect and mind become stable. With sustained efforts and through practice, if one keeps oneself stable and poised during the time of suffering, if one keeps his mind and intellect alert during the period of adversity, one will be able to uphold one's higher human status. There are three stages involved in confronting pain and suffering. First of all, one should try to tolerate pain and suffering. At the second stage, one will find it easy to tolerate, and at the third stage, one's mind will become tolerant and accommodating. Such repeated attempts to tolerate pain and suffering will develop into a habit of tolerance with a smile. Once this habit has developed, one will acquire the capacity and ability to tolerate any type of pain and suffering under all types of conditions.

Remember that there are more persons in the external world who inflict injuries as compared to persons who bring tidings of happiness, kindness and compassion. Every person is selfishly concerned with his own personal welfare and interests which is the main reason of conflict of his selfish interests with those of others. Under such conditions, a person who sacrifices his personal interests, has to suffer much more in this mundane world. A person who has learnt to tolerate pain and suffering after examining and analysing their causes and who maintained his inner peace, is the real and dedicated devotee of *Bhagwan Shankar*. It is well known that at the time of churning the ocean *(sagar manthan)*, *Bhagwan Shankar* drank all the poison materialized in the process to save others from the fatal sufferings and ill-effects of poison. If on the otherhand, he fails to tolerate sufferings and out of anger, annoyance and agitation, if he starts in indulging in improper and aggresive behaviour against others, then instead of having peace of mind, will land himself in more conflicts and confrontations in his social relations.

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DAY-13 (Continued....)

During one's life journey on earth, one has to repeatedly undergo the hardships inflicted by natural calamities, diseases, pestilence etc. and the anguish and anxiety created by the social antagonism and interpersonal conflicts. Under such conditions, first and foremost remedy is that one must maintain one's mental peace and poise to tolerate sufferings. When one maintains his mental peace and poise, one earns the power to neutralize one's inner agony and mental agitation as well. One will be able to pacify one's anger and annoyance, modify one's negative and hostile attitudes towards others which may have cropped up in one's mind. This reality is accepted and preached by the various schools of Hindu Philosophy.

Sankhyayoga postulates that there have been two forces called *purusha* and *prakriti* in the universe since times immemorial. All human beings are the representatives of the *purusha*-force, pointing out "the brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God." This yoga advises to cultivate tolerance and interpersonal harmony. *Bhaktiyoga*, another school of philosophy, postulates that every human being is part and parcel of supreme spiritual consciousness, which is all-pervasive and omnipresent. Both these schools of Indian philosophy preach that every human being should inculcate love and respect for each other and he should propagate spiritual oneness and divine harmony.

A seeker should develop faith in ancient seers and scholars to pursue the spiritual path, and fathom the divine reality following their guidelines culled from their personal experiences. Quite often, one treats the other person as noble or otherwise according to the degree of comforts or sufferings he gives to one. That is why the religious scriptures penned by great saints of yore have clearly directed : One should accept and admit only the actual truth without bothering whether it provides one happiness or sadness.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Nature (*Prakrti*)

Prakrti or Nature is the name of that power that effortlessly creates the world, that sustains it and that in due course of time, destroys it, i.e. it is that power of creation, sustenance and destruction that, without the manifest efforts of any person runs the world under its own rules and regulations. Though the conscious power hidden in the recesses of nature makes it active, the nature hiding this conscious power seems to be doing everything or getting it done. *Satwaguna* manifested as knowledge, *rajoguna* manifested as action and *tamoguna* manifested as darkness and inertia are found in its working. While the conscious power remains hidden, nature itself seems to be doing everything. For that reason it is known as *prakriti* i.e. *kriti* with *prakarsha*, a tendency of doing in a high style actions which happens themselves very systematically, in accordance with its principles ; it continues to flow and act, all drama of nature.

Prakrti or Nature also means disposition. It means that a person indulges in actions without deliberation, actions which are done out of habit or nature. '*Swa*' means one's own. '*Bhava*' means happen. So *swabhava* means actions that happen without outside pressure. Similarly, there is the Nature of this Universe which also means that it is doing or getting done through numerous persons its job of creation, preservation and destruction without deliberation or inspiration from anyone. This tendency to do things naturally or spontaneously is a natural bond which develops in a person intellect *(buddhi)*, ego *(ahankara)*, ten organs (*indriyani*) and mind *(manas)*, and in the outer world, it creates the five subtle elements *(tanmatras)* of sound, touch, form, taste and smell and from them the five gross elements *(mahabhuta)*; ether *(akasa)*, air *(vayu)*, fire *(agni)*, water *(jal)* and earth *(prithvi)*. One that runs the whole world is meta-nature *(para-prakrti)*, and the one present in an individual is called mundane nature *(apara-prakrti)*.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)Continued ...
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(50)

You have power; true ! being offended will you fight?
And, fighting with others, live peaceful with what might?
In want of peace happy in the world how will you go ?
And, with no happiness what prize life is to show ?

(51)

Impulses of the moment decide,
For all violent act on one's side;
Lasting peace may be kept in view,
A true reward, though for a few.

(52)

What's conducive to peace that ought to be judged as right,
Apparently be painful, stays at end, but if bright;
Contrariwise what ends in endless sorrows and pain,
That must be thought as wrong, on face, though, be with gain.

(53)

In body, in organs, in the senses and mind,
Living in intellect all right and wrong we find;
They get run all in wrongs, not being directed right,
Bless, by them rights adored in soul, in truth, insight.

(54)

Not being honoured one's will, or , one in comforts fail,
Or, pain fall out instead, or, hurt one's pride bewail;
Or, in unoccupied being where right ones stay yet slow,
Show ill past impressions all wrongs freely to flow.

(55)

One's own person and things, variously chance as fall,
In wrong moods, sentiments or as emotions call;
Views, other persons, too, one, as matters involve,
Flares up series of wrongs, then, in mind to revolve.

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DAY 15

As one's mind becomes more peaceful, poised and stable, one will also develop more power of tolerance. This is called mental courage or power of endurance. The path of spiritual life demands the cultivation and development of inner peace and poise. In this mundane world, mostly people lead life as a matter of habit or impulse, die like animals and are reborn the same, without evolving and developing higher mental faculties. But if a person becomes mentally active and alert, if he develops knowledge and insight, if he is able to control and destroy his vices intelligently, and if he is able to tolerate his sufferings and maintain his mental peace and poise, all this clearly shows that he has started realizing spiritual consciousness. Under such conditions, when he is devoted and dedicated to spiritual realisation, his mind will start concentrating and consolidating within itself and his mind will retract from the external world. His life-force will start accumulating within his body and as a result, he will experience inner bliss.

When a person faces some sufferings or when he experiences some happiness, his mind at once gets agitated and excited. Keeping in mind the ultimate gain of his mental peace and poise, he should learn to tolerate suffering patiently. Also, one should stop protesting against and complaining about other persons in the external world. This will lead one to pursue the path of spiritual life patiently and peacefully. When a person adopts the path of spiritual life he stops involving himself in futile social interactions and starts living a solitary life. Even otherwise, every person has to be mentally alone within himself, most of the time. Thus only that person, who has learnt to tolerate pain and suffering and who keeps his mental peace and poise, can lead a happy personal life.

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DAY 15 Continued...

The best solution is to destroy all the vices as soon as they raise their head in the mind. One has to tolerate all the pain and anguish which is the result of deprivation and non-gratification of these vices. Life is passing very quickly, and it takes some years to develop the power of tolerance. But at the end, one will develop a strong temperament and character for tolerance in the face of sufferings. Many a time he will not even notice the sufferings, as he with persistent practice of toleration, will fortify his spiritual and religious convictions. A person realises God when he devotedly and dedicatedly pursues the spiritual life, keeping *titiksha* as his key mental attitude. Such a religious person witnesses everywhere the same supreme divine consciousness called God. He will not have an attachment or an aversion against any living being and will have no fears or apprehensions. With his mind concentrated and consolidated within itself, experiencing spiritual bliss, when a person realizes spiritual happiness by patiently and devotedly pursuing the path of spiritual life, he attains his ultimate spiritual goal—the inner, eternal spiritual bliss, and has himself liberated from all his worldly woes, worries and fetters. He achieves a close proximity with God, the store-house of permanent and everlasting spiritual happiness, and comes to know that such everlasting spiritual happiness is also within him. Whether he lives or dies, nobody can deprive him of his inherent spiritual happiness, and he is also not afraid of death. Absolved from ego, the whirlpool in his mind (borne out of persons and products of changing world), he learns to swim alongside the currents of supreme divine consciousness called God, to reach and merge in Him, which is the ultimate goal of human existence.

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DAY 16

All living beings possess a vital element (life-force); or the 'Angel of Existence' is present in the physical body right from the moment of birth. But owing to ignorance and immaturity, the living being at the time of birth starts regarding this vital element in the physical body as its soul *(spirit)* or its self. The real, actual and pure soul or self consists of *sat-chit-ananda*-all three put together in one—which has no material form or existence, and which cannot be understood or comprehended without sincere and sustained efforts. It is the vital element (in the form of life-force) which energises and which activates the physical body of every living being, and which makes it capable of moving in all directions of the universe.

The learned scholars of yore have accepted that without the knowledge of this vital element (life-god) or the life force in the physical body, it is not possible to successfully pursue the path either of worldly achievements or of religious and spiritual life and to achieve salvation. In the Vedas, this vital element or life force is said to be under the complete control and administration of the arch-angel of existence, called *Prajapati*. In other words, *Prajapati* (life-god) was the first arch-angel who adopted and manifested himself in the material body in the external, mundane world. When a living being is born, he possesses the vital element or life force in the most crude, rudimentary and immature form. But the more the living being develops and the more it matures, or evolves 'consciousness' and the more it becomes aware of the external material world. Then it is called *jivatma*, because the living being has developed its specific, personal, unique consciousness called his self or soul or spiritual force. One needs to learn in detail the spiritual force; if one wants to pursue the path for salvation.

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DAY 17

A person remains engaged in and enticed to the material world to realize and achieve worldly comforts and happiness through the persons and objects of the external world. However, one day when he learns that the persons and products of the world are ephemeral and also transitory and he starts disengaging himself from their clutches. He starts ruminating over the ways to get freedom from the external mundane attractions and also from his fetters of anger, attachment, aversion, self-pride *(ego)* and other delusions. Further, all these emotions motivate and affect the grown-up adult in the same way in which as they influence an immature child. The emotional reactions of a child (to objects or events not of its liking) are controlled by its consciousness which is part and parcel of the supreme spiritual consciousness (also called Consciousness-in-General or God) which creates and controls the universe.

The repetitive exposures to anything leads to the development of habits. The human mind gets attracted only to that object which can provide it comfort and happiness. Seeking comfort and happiness is its inherent tendency. Set by *Prajapati* (life-god), the arch-angel of existence, the God of blessings controls the welfare of all living beings. Being all-pervading *Prajapati* enables every living being to experience emotions and sensations. Though *Prajapati* does not differentiate the living beings and though he considers them equal, when human beings interact with one another in society, they develop the concept of 'mine' and 'thine' owing to personal interests. They develop attachment or aversion, irritation, ill-will, conflict, jealousy, hostility, suspicion etc. At this juncture, one should objectively examine and assess the best course which helps one to realise one's spiritual goals, and follow it with committed devotion and dedication, overcoming stresses, strains, sufferings etc. on the path.

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DAY 18

Mental calm and peace-loving attitude can be cultivated and developed with wilful effort. To cultivate and develop mental calm and peace loving attitude, one has to develop respect for others, and as a consequence, others will respond with respect and develop a positive attitude towards him. Thus, one's positive feelings for others will develop in one affectionate and accommodating character. One's mind will not react to his momentary impulses and will become much disciplined with the help of meditation and self-analysis and one will react to social situations in an intelligent manner and very carefully and thoughtfully.

One's evil behaviour not only affects one's social relations in the external world but even disturbs one's sleep with painful dreams. Moreover these will affect one's next life after death. One's evil behavior will carve evil impressions on one's soul which will persist in the form of latent tendencies *(sanskars)* and thereby determine one's next life after death, and one will have to face the result of one's evil deeds, which will surely be painful. Thus the evil deeds not only affect one's next life but they also affect negatively even one's sleep and dreams. Even in the waking hours, these impressions of the evil actions crop up in the form of disturbing memories and painful thoughts. The human soul is only an objective and true witness and a neutral record-keeper of the actions of a person.

For one's own well being, one should work hard for three objectives : (i) one should abstain from evil actions, (ii) always perform good deeds, and (iii) never carry evil intentions in one's mind. These constitute noble and pious intentions and objectives, which can only be achieved by keeping one's mind active, alert and cautious. When this happens, it would mean that the divine, spiritual consciousness abiding within the seeker has taken the control of his life.

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DAY 19

The Hindu word *Ishwar* denotes divine spiritual consciousness. The first part *'Ish'* means divine spiritual power or *samarthya*. Thus the word *'Ishwar'* means a person who possesses divine power. Divine, spiritual power is of two types: The first type of divine spiritual power constitutes conceptual awareness and theoretical knowledge; and the second type of divine spiritual power denotes the ability to translate that theoretical knowledge into action and practice. What is knowledge? It is only some theoretical concepts or ideas. One should be conceptually aware or have the idea as to what leads to harmful results, and what brings good results. Such conceptual awareness or theoretical knowledge is called Power of Knowledge or *gyanashakti*.

If one possesses only the theoretical knowledge and does not have mental resolve to put that theoretical knowledge into action and practice, that would mean that one has attained only a part of the divine power. Only when one puts the conceptual, theoretical knowledge into action then it can be perfectly assumed that one has acquired some part of the supreme spiritual consciousness and his mind does operate in an active, alert and conscious manner. One should always remember that the forces of habit are very strong as compared to the forces of active, alert and conscious mind. The path of habits is very convenient and easy to adopt, but this path will enslave and entice one to the external material world which never proves helpful for spiritual salvation. For that end, one must possess a very active, alert and conscious mind as well as both the power of theoretical knowledge and the spiritual power to translate the theoretical knowledge into practice and action.

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DAY 20

When the divine qualities of self control and harmonius, social existence get entrenched in a person, his eyes will reflect appreciation and admiration, instead of jealousy and greed. He will fail to notice weaknesses and demerits of other people. When his mind inculcates and imbibes divine knowledge, he will never have feelings of jealousy for other persons. On the other hand, he will happily participate in the happiness, prosperity and wealth of other persons. When such divine and noble traits become visible in his person, he will surely affect the other persons of the society in a positive way while he is interacting with them.

God is omnipresent and all-pervasive. The other person will feel elated to observe such divine and noble feelings in the seeker. A person who thus adopts the spiritual path, always thinks about the welfare of other persons. Everybody respects and admires such noble and kind human beings. The seeker's spiritual path of life should get reflected in his actions, for other persons around him to treat him as a pious and religious person. His eyes should manifest his kind and noble feelings, because he does not have jealousy. His ears should not hear any backbiting. His language should become sweet and sympathetic. His gentleness should get reflected in all his physical behaviour. His mind should manifest his inherent spiritual attitude. His intellect should become discriminative and admire others' noble qualities. He should be both tolerant and accommodating, without selfishness and always give preference to the welfare and well-being of all human beings.

Thus, the blessings of Almighty God should deeply affect, dominate and transform his intellect and mind, and his bodily organic and glandular functions.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Right faith or noble religious way of life *(Dharma)*

Ordinarily, the word *Dharma* means that a person regarding himself as carried away by various kind of vices must lead his life avoiding all those vices. Desire, anger, ego etc. impel a man to numerous actions. In such a state, if a person is awake in his mind, if he keeps his intellect steady, if he avoids the impulses of nature, if he saves his mind from all these wrong tendencies, if he keeps close to his own self and if he leads his life cautiously, he is pursuing the path of *Dharma* or right faith. In simple words, the spirit of *dharma* or right faith means to bear one's own self and not being carried away by the impulses of vices to a path that will result in crying and repentance when one may owing to wrong insatiable passion, take excessive or unsuitable food for his health, when one may speak wrong bitter words out of the passion of anger or when act wrongly under the influence of anger, ego etc. Leading life cautiously, avoiding all kinds of vices, keeping one's mind on the right path, avoiding all tendencies and emotions in the mind is the general meaning of *Dharma* or right faith. A person following such a path of *Dharma* or right faith will one day be free from all vices and pains and he will attain a stage of permanent peace and happiness in his life time and ultimately will attain eternal cosmological consciousness manifested in his soul as eternal bliss.

Dharma means doing all that is worth doing through physical sense-organs, mind and intellect, for one's ultimate welfare i.e. for one's well being and permanent happiness. This is called *Dharma* or the path that will lead a person to God and the ultimate state of salvation.

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DAY 22

When a person's mental and physical existence is dominated by and saturated with spiritual power, then other persons will quickly notice his noble and spiritual qualities and he will be much adored, admired and honoured by them. In ancient Hindu spiritual literature, three different terms, i.e. '*Ishwar*', '*Paramatma*' and '*Bhagwan*', have been used to denote the Almighty God. The term '*Paramatma*' denotes that the one and the same spiritual power (God) is inhabiting the physical body of each and every living being, operating like electric current in each of them. This spiritual power operates and functions like an instrument of divine knowledge and sincerely records all the inherent emotions of each and every person, affecting his sound and words. His emotions and consequently the sounds and words produced, always affect the emotions of other living beings. This is how Almighty God manifests and operates His spiritual powers in the mundane world. God is all-pervading and omnipresent. God is present within each and every living creature in the form of divine knowledge or spiritual consciousness which function like an electric current and energises all living beings in the universe. This has been called divine dynamism or *maya*. Thus God operates within each and every living being and manifests Himself in the mundane world through His two divine powers, i.e. His divine knowledge (*gyana shakti*) and His divine dynamism (*maya-shakti)* or divine power of executiion. God comprehends and analyses the mundane situation with His own divine knowledge and then generates divine currents to produce emotions of various types to suit the mundane situation. Thus, divine consciousness generates in the human being, sometimes the emotion of anger, sometimes love and affection, some other time fun and hilarity and sometimes hostility for others.

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DAY 23

The first living body came into existence in times immemorial. The universal divine spirit or God created this living body in a moment. The term 'moment' is an abstract measure of time. In the concrete, mundane world time is measured in terms of seconds, hours etc. In one second, there are so many moments that it is not possible to enumerate and count them. *Prajapati* (life-god) or the arch-angel of existence, created all the sentinent beings of the universe. Every moment, *Prajapati* created the various forms of living bodies (known in Hindu religious books as '*Chaurasi-lakh yonis*' or eighty-four lakh species of living organisms). Once the living body gets created, it has to take its own care and the newly created body completely loses its connection with Prajapati. But one should know the role of Prajapati in one's creation and the way to liberate himself from the vicious circle of birth-and-death of the living species. Prajapati is in the form of life-force or elan-vital. When Prajapati infuses life-force in the physical body, the life-force will propel the body in a certain direction, influencing its external behaviour.

If one humbly worships God, and through it if one acquires the divine knowledge of good and bad and if one puts its into practice for one's well being, it indicates that one is blessed and God is guiding and directing one's life all the time. When the divine knowledge starts dominating and directing one's mind to such an extent that one becomes capable of recognizing one's fetters and shatters them, this would indicate that one has become a true, sincere, committed devotee of God. Always remember that God has granted every human being an intellectual power and the sense of discrimination, for full use by him.

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DAY 24

Time and again it has been emphasized that the mind of every person is controlling and directing the functions of his body. Even though one's mind has inculcated noble and gentle feelings, and even though an alert and discriminating intellect controls one's senses, one's vices remain hibernating and concealed in one's dormant mind. If one is fond of sleeping then one's mind will not be able to comprehend and recognise one's vices, which remain hidden under the darkness of sleep. If the seeker, through persistent efforts, is able to renounce the comforts of sleep and if he recognizes and if he subjugates all his vices and fetters which have taken shelter in sleep, God in the form of divine knowledge, will at once appear in his mind, and emancipate and liberate him from them. During the religions celebrations of *Krishna Janmaashtami*, the devotees keep fully awake till the birth-hour of Lord Krishna in the mid-night, similarly, during *shivratri*, when Lord Shiva married his consort, *Parvati*, the devotees keep fully awake during the night. It is a strong conviction among the devotees that by relinquishing sleep during these religious festivals, they will get fully liberated from all the vices and fetters and that thereby they will attain and experience maximum spiritual peace and divine bliss. That is why these two religious celebrations, which take place in the dark phase of the lunar cycle, have acquired great importance in the minds of devotees. Thus if one becomes capable of overcoming sleep, which is hiding one's vices of attachment, aversion, pride, delusion etc., one will attain spiritual salvation and Lord Krishna will manifest Himself to him in his meditation or '*samadhi*' and he will not have any tension in his mind.

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DAY 25

A seeker must acknowledge the universal fact that when the mundane comforts of the external world are denied to him, his mind becomes impatient and irrational. Similarly, he gets irritated because of his inherent aversion, then he starts planning to harm his enemy. Exactly in this way, the other person with whom he interacts behaves. It is also true, that one cannot control the behaviour of others, but one can monitor one's actions and restrain oneself form indulging in impulsive behaviour. That is why it is advised that one should not only insulate oneself from such unpleasant interactions, but one should forgive others for their odd, untoward and unexpected behaviour. One should also cultivate some austerity by renouncing one's personal worldly comforts, in a gradual manner, to augment divine qualities in one's person. A person who is, thus, able to renounce one's mundane comforts provided by objects and persons, is called a renunciate. When he is able to tolerate the pain of deprivation of the mundane comforts, and when he with mental insight maintains and when he preserves his upright behaviour, then he will surely develop and achieve the divine merits and attributes of God.

As a matter of fact, the spiritual bliss is not in the external world, rather it is very much inherent in one's inner soul. As a first step, it is safe to confront and convince the mind with this factual reality, so that the seeker's mind may not get grossly entangled and extensively engaged in the external world. One should make concentrated efforts to cultivate and develop these two capabilities: (1) to understand and grasp the mundane world correctly i.e. to conceptually and theoretically know as to what is good or harmful and (2) to practically implement and execute the theoretical knowledge.

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DAY 26

Prajapati or life-god (Arch-Angel of Existence or Sentinent Creation) also employs two mental capabilities: (1) perception of pleasure or knowledge and experience of happiness, which the human mind likes and which it admires, and (2) perception of pain or knowledge and experience of suffering, which the human mind dislikes and which it avoids. Every living being is equipped with these two sensual perceptions and with the help of these, a person knows, controls and seeks the various objects of this mundane world. He develops his mind and intellect, his body and senses to seek pleasure as well as to avoid pain in the same manner or accordingly.

No worldly laboratory can help a seeker to realize God. The worldly laboratories can enrich his material knowledge concerning the material external world. But God can be realized only in one's inner soul, through one's research in one's mental workshop. In other words, when one withdraws his mind from the external world, when one's mind stops depending on the knowledge of the mundane world, when one's mind starts concentrating in the internal soul, only then one will realise God, who is all the time present in one and not in the external world. That is why Bhagwan (God) has preached throughout the Gita to learn and practise *nishkam karmayoga*, that is " not to perform any deed in the world with the mind riveted and fixed on achieving the cherished rewards". Rather, a human being should perform all his actions without expectation of the rewards.

Through, first acquiring the divine knowledge and then putting it into practice, one can gradually reach a stage where he will not have any desire whatsoever, after discarding all worldly desires and their fruits. When one achieves this, one experiences the permanent Divine Bliss.

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DAY 27

The seers and philosophers of yore have used different words as *Paramatma*, *Ishwara*, *Parmeshwara*, *Bhagwan* to denote the different spiritual aspects of one and the same supreme divine reality, and the seeker is advised to mentally grasp and clearly understand the inherent spiritual powers vested in each of these aspects of divinity. Thereafter, with committed devotion and sincere dedication one should worship *Bhagwan* or *Ishwara* or *Paramatma*, to realize his special and specific goals.

'*Paramatma*' denotes the supreme divine reality which is present in the form of consciousness in all the living-beings, uniformly and to the same degree or level. *Paramatma* is the universal Consciousness-in-General, the source-head of all the specific, personal consciousness called soul or *jivatma*. Every living being possesses a personal, individual distinct consciousness or soul or self. On the other hand, the word *Ishwara* denotes the various powers and the innumerable capabilities of the supreme divine reality. The supreme divine reality has two distinct powers or capabilities: (1) the divine knowledge and (2) the divine power of execution. Owing to the power of knowledge, the supreme divine reality is called all-knowing and omniscient. As a second step, supreme divinity employs divine knowledge to execute all the affairs of the universe. When a living being first acquires knowledge and then when he puts that knowledge into practical use, it can be assumed that the two powers and capabilities of the supreme divine reality have manifested in the living being. The word *'Bhagwan'* denotes that the supreme divine reality has been fully able to subjugate all the forces of nature.

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DAY 28 (4th Weekened)

Insatiable Worldly Passion *(Trishna)*

The desire or affection for the pleasure-giving object or person that flows in the mind is the insatiable worldly passion of attachment, and the aversion, hatred and anger etc., which flow in the mind towards the pain-giving object or person to get rid of it and which does not let the object be off the mind is the worldly passion of the nature of aversion. Both attachment and aversion are the forms of *trishna*, the insatiable worldly passion. In the presence of both, a person finds himself in a position of disadvantage as if he has lost something and as if he is keen to acquire it. Owing to this insatiable worldly passion to possess that object, he is not able to pay attention to anything. This lack of interest in anything else is called *arati*, and is the root cause of all pain. Recognition of it is called inner vision *(Antardarshan)*. In order to see and recognise it, one must keep one's mind absorbed in it, even against its inclination. When the mind recognises the insatiable worldly passion in which the mind is absorbed and of which it edures the pain, this pain will end in the course of enduring it. As soon as the insatiable passion, that hides the soul, the essence of which is knowledge is turned away, the soul will be manifested and that person will have permanent satisfaction because he has attained his goal, the realisation of Soul as Bliss and he will be fearless.

Mind's pursuit of the external world and ignoring the soul is indeed the characteristic of the insatiable worldly passion, *trishna*. A living being by his nature looks at the outer world, opens out his sense organs and tries to acquire the worldly objects and feels the experiences of the pain and pleasure through his relation with sense organs. That is why a constant thirst or inclination to continue to dwell in the outer world, with the powers of body and mind, is the characteristic of the insatiable worldly passion, *trishna*.

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DAY 28 (4th Weekend) Continued ... Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life.

(56)

In discomforted being ones are viewed and felt wrong,
Some are looked as enemies, others friend to belong;
Aspire, then, one not right, in emotions unfine,
In speech and acts goes one's conduct out of right-line

(57)

As for long one can't live in ignorance confined
In thinking one, then, lost immoral things remind;
With trash of life as such how one can live occupied,
In all dealings of life for peace rightly applied.

(58)

View, feel and aspire right, though unwilling be mind,
Fail all wrong emotions, to right ones live inclined;
Be right in speech, in acts; be not depressed at end,
Don't foster fetters as wrong states get you intend.

(59)

Blessed are such things memorised by which one's peace prevail,
Hail that meditation which pacifies; for truth not fail;
So, live one right occupied, not as it ends as ill,
In all dealings go thus will of blessedness fulfil.

(60)

Seek explanation of straining what may confine,
Discard subjective all; search for knowledge divine;
May not embroiling self exhibit its presence,
Alike in all with love, hate -- preponderance.

(61)

Realise fundamental truth which rules all by its laws,
No man responsible hold here and there with flaws;
True! be men answerable for themselves for all deed,
But as one's peace implies alone dwell 'That' in creed.

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DAY 29

In Hindu religious scriptures,three words i.e. *Parameshwara (Ishwar)*, *Paramatma* and *Bhagwan*, have been used interchangeably and have the same and similar connotations. *Parameshwara* is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and all-pervasive in the external manifested world and there is nothing beyond its domain and control. *Paramatma* (Consciousness-in-General) finds itself reflected among all the living beings in the form of their vital, eternal, specific, individual consciousness (*atma*). There is no sentinent existence in the whole world without its vital presence. *Bhagwan*, as already explained has six divine powers: knowledge concerning *vidya* and *avidya*, knowledge concerning *karmagati* and *akarmagati* and knowledge concerning *bandhan* and *moksha*. Among these three facets of supreme divine reality, *Bhagwan* personifies the maximum, and every person should seek his shelter and blessings, which implies that for his own well being, every seeker should inculcate and develop in himself all those divine qualities and spiritual capabilities which *Bhagwan* possesses .

Without developing and augmenting these divine charactersies of Bhagwan, it is not possible to transcend the limited, small, personal existence and usher into the wider, bigger social existence. Here, the limited, small personal existence signifies that the person has limited and circumscribed-consciousness subjective (or intraactive awareness) and that he lives his personal, private existence; whereas the wider, bigger social existence denotes that the person has developed a bigger, wider objective consciousness (or helpful and harmonious interactive awareness), and that he has accepted to live with other persons, ever wanting to nurture in his person the divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan*.

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DAY 30

The whole universe, the macrocosm is the domain of *Bhagwan (Parameshwara)*, and He treats it as His family, and He manifests Himself very openly and explicitly and is easily available to all the members of the family without discrimination and differentiation, and without considering anybody socially small, circumscribed, limited and finite. All those things which Almighty God creates and which He provides in infinite and limitless magnitude for all the creations in the manifested universe, are available to each and everyone, at the individual and personal level in the limited, and circumscribed family. The small circle of an individual's family prescribes the boundaries of his social life and the extent of his interpersonal interaction. His family constitutes the primary social field of his interpersonal relations followed by interactions with blood relations, friends, well- wishers, persons at his workplace, and other places like eateries, market, hospital etc., and finally interaction with those who are his adversaries and who are against him. His social circle constitutes his life circle, which is very small and finite. But, even so, it is essential that he should cultivate and develop in his person all the divine qualities of Bhagwan during his limited, small life span. Also simply harbouring the divine qualities as theoretical, abstract principles in his mind will be futile, unless he translates and practises those divine qualities in his daily life and interactions, persistently and continuously. Always remember the fact, that the spirit and intention with which a person performs his actions, will compel the other persons to react and perform actions to reciprocate in a similar spirit and intention.

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DAY 31

One's family and home constitute one's circumscribed, small circle of one's social life. In the midst of his small family circle, when one ensures the happiness of his children, he too feels happy. If his language is polite, affectionate and friendly, one will find that the language of children is equally polite, affectionate, friendly and respectful for him. His negative emotional reaction and antipathy will draw unfriendly, unkind, unhealthy response from one's children and one's home and the family will suffer chaos. So when one serves one's children, friends and dear ones very sincerely and committedly, they reciprocate with similar congenial and kind feelings towards one.

When two persons come face to face, *Paramatma* in the form of inherent intuitive divine knowledge, monitors their interactions. The subtle forces of *Paramatma* dominate and determine the social situation in subtle, unexpected and unknown ways and weaves the social fabric of interpersonal and mutual relations in its own predetermined, dramatic fashion. *Paramatma* controls the inherent attitudes and latent temperamental tendencies of human beings. He forces some persons to become humble, gentle and polite, and compels some others to adopt hostile and harsh attitude. The way in which human beings interact with each other under the influence of their divine intutions will determine and control their social behaviour and compel them to act in a specific emotional manner. All human actions and reactions take place in the above said manner. Nobody develops such a reaction knowingly, willingly, and intentionally. All these reactions take place automatically, as if predetermined and propelled by some spiritual power. The fact is, whatever one sows in one's mind, so shall he reap in the external world.

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JUNE

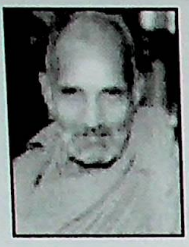
Karmayoga

Karmayoga may be simply understood as performing all actions as ordained (fixed) duties to please God, without any desire for reward or fruit. Such a way of performing action is *nishkama karma*. Ordinarily a person works in order to reap some reward. The fruit is the incentive for performing a deed. The true *karmayogi* believes that his duty lies in performing every action in a disinterested manner. He has the strong belief the God will give him the due result at the right time. His duty is to work. Only a person who has renounced the world or one has overcome his attachment to the sense of 'I' and 'mine' is capable of *nishkama karma*. Performing action without desire helps to free the mind of its various fetters. The mind is no longer restless about loss or gain, praise or blame, joy or sorrow and so on. The mind rises above fluctuating emotions, attitudes, likes and dislikes. Naturally, the practice of *karmayoga* can help the person to become more and more detached and unaffected by the constant changes that take place in human situations and relationships. By surrendering all his actions to the Divine he is able to become calm and unruffled in course of time and thus plunge himself in meditation.

Editor

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Day 1



JUNE

The main determining and deciding factor for inter-personal actions and reactions is *Bhagawan's* divine discipline and his spiritual system. In Sansksit language, it is called Bhagwan's *vidhi* or Divine determinism, which human beings call "*Brahma's Vidhan*" or *Bhagwan's* Spiritual Constitution. One can himself observe that *Bhagwan's* spiritual constitution is fully operative and successfully functional in the external universe and the phenomenal world. *Bhagwan's* spiritual constitution is also called the rules and regulations of *Paramatma* or Consciousness-in-General.

In the external world, interpersonal behavior is described and defined in such words as, "you and me" *(tera-mera)*. But in reality, it is *Brahma's vidhan* (Divine Constitution) and *Bhagwan's vidhi* (divine determinism) which control interpersonal behaviour, which determines human happiness and suffering, and which directs and decides the ultimate welfare. In other words, the rules and regulations of the all-pervasive *Paramatma* (Consciousness-in-General) who is universally present in the form of divine knowledge, uniformity and operate in every living being to the same degree and extent.

Just as *Paramatma* (Consciousness-in-General) in the form of inherent divine knowledge is present in every living being, in the same manner, *Paramatma* controls and determines interpersonal behavior through his electric-like divine power and generates and stimulates reciprocal and similar emotions when human beings meet face to face. The generated emotions modulate and control the verbal expression, language, eye movements and other social propulsions and parameters of a person. The preset emotions control and determine even the happiness and sufferings of the person. All these activities constitute social interaction.

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DAY 2

With the help of inherent divine knowledge, if one wants to decide and determine as to what causes and controls interpersonal behaviour, he will find that it is Paramatma and His divine intuitive power which stimulates, which generates and which modulates human behaviour and social interactions. Even the desire to investigate this field of research does not crop up unless one withdraws one's mind from his mundane engagements, social entanglements and worldly pursuits, for the simple reason that one's mind is so much preoccupied in the external world that it cannot spare time for any other thing or thought. When the mind gets exhausted by worldly pursuits or when it has no selfish, personal interests and objects to achieve, it becomes lazy or inactive and it prefers to go to sleep. So, the seeker is reminded that without withdrawing from the worldly activities, nobody can grasp, understand and unravel the divine dynamism and mysteries of Bhagwan. Because of his ignorance and temperamental urges, the person keeps pursuing his worldly activities and mundane affairs. When a person gets tired owing to excessive worldly engagements, he seeks relaxation and rest in false, meaningless engagements which suit his compulsive nature and impulsive temperament.

As one behaves towards others, *Parameshwara* (God) will motivate others to behave towards one in the same similar manner. This fact has been repeatedly said in ancient religious literature. *Parmeshwar* is uniformly present in every person and in every place. *Paramatma* is present in the seeker and He manifests Himself in the manner in which the seeker has trained and in which he has conditioned his mind. Similarly, God is existing in the mind of the seeker's opponent or in the mind the person whom he is dealing with, and He reveals Himself in the manner in which the other person has trained and conditioned his mind, or in the manner he has conditioned it.

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DAY 3

As every human being is an important member of Paramatma's family in his manifested form; it is the main and important duty of a person to treat every human being with utmost respect and affectionate dedication just as he loves his family members and, just as he holds himself responsible for their welfare and well-being. Such love and adoration represent Bhagwan's kindness and consideration, which one has to practise in the small social circle of his family life. One who adopts such behaviour in his family life and also in the society at large, is referred to as a culturally advanced and socially revered person, in ancient religious books. There is a shloka in *Sanskrit* language: *"Uddar-Charitanam tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,"* which means : those who are culturally advanced and who are socially revered, treat all the living beings dwelling on this planet earth as members of *Vasudeva's (Bhagwan's)* family.

If one sincerely starts adoring and loving other persons, the all-pervading and omnipresent Divine Consciousness-in-General *(Paramatma)* or *Bhagwan* will manifest Himself like an electric current and create in the other person the feeling of affection, regard, cordiality, mutual love and sharing to generate harmonious social dealings. In order to experience this marvel, first one has to cultivate and develop all the divine qualities and positive emotions in one's own person with utmost sincerity.

The ego and self-pride of a person does not let his mind become humble and polite. The truth is that his mind loves to get social recognition and respect from others, thus desiring to be treated as a superior and honoured person. One has to sacrifice one's personal interests, develop the attitude of a renunciate, and give preference to others' needs and serve others, to earn that respect and recognition. In other words, one has to live like a desireless devotee *(nishkam bhakta)* referred to in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

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DAY 4

Nishkam KarmaYoga as explained in the Bhagavad Gita by Lord Krishna, means "to perform all deeds and actions in the mundane world without seeking any material rewards in return". One who practises it sincerely and devotedly is called a *nishkam bhakta*, and his selfless actions are referred to as *nishkam karma*. By giving up the cherished fruits of one's desires, one should cultivate and develop in one's mind, noble, catholic, liberal and philanthropic emotions and attitudes. That is to say, when somebody is happy and prosperous, then the seeker should not be jealous of his happiness and prosperity. When the other person is suffering and when he is in agony, he extends compassion, kindness and sympathy even though he may not prove to be materially helpful to him.

To provide any help to the suffering person depends on one's financial resources and material capabilities, but one must not prove to be a pauper in the spiritual sentiments of compassion, kindness and sympathy. The spiritual sentiment of sympathy *(daya)*, is the divine quality of Bhagwan in the form of spiritual sentiment of compassion *(karuna)*. Thus, the committed, sincere and continuous practice of compassion *(karuna)* amounts to worship and adoration of *Bhagwan*. When one feels equally happy in the happiness of others, it is called friendly affection *(maitri)* which is another divine quality of *Bhagwan*, and its constant and sincere practice amounts to the worship and adoration of *Bhagwan*.

Simultaneously, one must develop the habit of ignoring the demerits and faults of others and must appreciate the qualities in them. However, if one has the power and authority to rectify their faults and shortcomings, in case of his children, family and subordinates etc., one is fully justified to act in that direction, with patience, compassion and humanitarian feelings, bereft of anger, revenge etc.

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DAY 5

Although the human body is generally considered as a bag of dirty garbage and odious stuff, interestingly it possesses one very precious, beautiful and wonderful element, i.e. the sublime divine consciousness *(chetna)*. This element of sublime divine consciousness possesses the power of concentration *(dhyana)*. Because of these two great powers, i.e. (1) the power of sublime divine consciousness and (2) the power of concentration, the two persons sitting close by and almost rubbing each other, never hate each other, although their physical bodies are full of detestable and decaying organic wastage, which otherwise everybody avoids to touch. In this manner, without noticing and paying any heed to the demerits and faults of a person one should admire and adore his element of sublime divine consciousness. This mental quality is called wilful and intentional ignoring *(upeksha)*.

This cosmos is the divine creation of *Paramatma* . As a specific, single human being, one cannot lead a separate existence of one's own. One must therefore, develop in his mind positive, harmonious, cordial and affectionate feelings for one's fellow human beings. All are divine creations of our common divine father, *Paramatma* .

In order to recognize and know *Paramatma* in His manifested form in the external world, one has to cultivate and develop in one's person the ten divine qualities of *Parmatma* (mentioned previously too) : (1) Friendly affection *(maitri)* (2) Compassion *(karuna)*, (3) Praiseworthy attitude towards good qualities of others *(mudita)*, (4) Affecting ignorance or showing indifference towards sins / bad qualities of others *(upeksha)* (5) Mental tolerance and intellectual forgiveness *(kshama)*, (6) Noble and right conduct in all events *(sheel)*, (7) Spiritual renunciation/Self sacrifice/charity *(dana)*, (8) Right efforts *(veerya)* (9) Meditation/truth seeking observation *(dhyana)* and (10) Super-intelligence *(pragna)*.

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DAY 6

During one's life span, one has to cultivate and develop in one's person the ten divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, and devotedly and dedicatedly implement and exercise them in one's everyday social interactions as well as in one's personal life. Human ego, which is invisible, is the root cause of all evils in this world. It obstructs the path of the seeker in his efforts to attain these divine merits. When a person ignores his ego, he develops the sentiments of humility, tolerance and self-submission in his mind and his actions and reactions in his dealings with external world are also devoid of negative, derogatory and evil feelings for others. Also his devotion and dedication for worship and adoration of *Bhagwan* become very beautiful and blissful. He automatically develops in himself the spirit of renunciation, self-sacrifice and charity, which further leads to the subjugation and surrender of his ego.

He develops the firm conviction that whatever recognition and respect other persons bestow on him, and only that should constitute his real and valid ego. That is to say, the recognition and respect that other people will extend to him because of his noble and gentle deeds in the external world, should constitute his true and valid ego. The fact is, that the outside world and other persons with whom one deals, never bother to accept and admit one's assumed and imagined self-pride and ego. If on the other hand, a person's ego is actually based on his actual good deeds and pious sentiments, every one will respect and recognize his ego as the ego of a noble and gentle person. The world will in fact praise, admire and applaud him and declare that *Bhagwan* has abundantly blessed him with all these noble and divine qualities.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Freedom from Worldly Bondage/Deliverance (*Mukti*)

Mukti means deliverance, from all kinds of fetters—also deliverance from wrong actions of mind, intellect, sense organs and the body etc. *Mukti* means freedom from all these, and attainment of everlasting peace in one's own self or soul. In brief, it means giving up the ten fetters of spiritual ignorance, ego, delusion, attachment and aversion etc., to experience the eternal bliss of the soul, and attainment of freedom from the pain of insatiable passions forever. It also means to experience this soul as pure consciousness in all living beings after realizing this delivered soul within one's own self. This alone pervades in all and there is no other truth except this. This has been called cosmological consciousness. Experiencing this delivered or liberated soul in all is the experience of cosmological consciousness.

The person wandering in the world experiences pleasure with the help of worldly living beings and objects. Even when he loses the power to acquire pleasure due to his old age, disease etc., his insatiable worldly passion doesn't let him rest in peace or comfort. He has to come back to the world and wander in that world even after death because of that very pain. A worldly man does not seek any other support for his happiness except the support of the objects of the world. After attaining the abovesaid deliverance and experiencing bliss in his soul, a liberated person will not again go to the world to avert his pains. This is deliverance from the cycle of birth and death.

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DAY 8

The symbolic traditional practices and methods of worshipping and adoring *Bhagwan* (God) have very significant, inherent meanings and psychological value. These do not mean that one is worshipping and adoring some sand and stone statue or some coloured picture printed on paper. As a matter of fact, one is worshipping that inherent, inner divine element the spiritual consciousness which one is concealing in one's mind.

Whenever one sees the photograph of one's departed dear ones (mother, father, wife, husband etc.), one's heart gets overwhelmed with emotions of sincere gratitude and committed devotion, because the photo reminds one of all the love and care which one's kind late relative bestowed on one when he/she was alive. The fact is that some words printed on a piece of paper or a photograph or even a movie cannot arouse the emotions of sincere gratitude and dedicated love and affection, nor does it amount to worship of some photo. When one sees the photo of any dear relative who has now departed, one is reminded of his/her love and affection for one, and it arouses in one's heart a specific emotion of gratitude, and tears start flowing form one's eyes. So it is when one visits a temple, graveyard, or looks at a marble statue, it is only to stimulate and generate some specific emotion; or in other words, it is the worship and veneration of that specific divine emotion. As a matter of fact, that specific induced emotion reminds one of all the good and great qualities of the deity whose marble statue one sees in the temple. So when one worships some marble statue which represents, and stimulates the specific emotions of adoration and admiration, it amounts to the worship and veneration of those good and great qualities of the deity.

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DAY 9

When a person harbours hostile and angry feelings in his mind against somebody, the face of that person will reflect the emotions of hostility and anger. When the mind is calm and happy, the face will reflect peace and happiness. In other words, whatever feelings are in the mind, the facial features will adopt the expression of the same, accordingly. In a similar way, when the mind inculcates and adopts the noble and divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, these qualities get reflected and manifested through the facial expression of the person. But instead of searching and seeing the noble and divine qualities of *Bhagwan* in the facial expressions of other persons, one should make sincere efforts to cultivate and develop in one's own person these noble and divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, and invoke in one's own person the divine face of *Bhagwan*.

The face in the printed picture (or idol) of *Bhagwan* will only motivate and inspire the devotee for a transitory moment. But when he visualises the celestial face of *Bhagwan* with devotion and dedication, and if all his noble and divine qualities get imprinted on his mind, other persons will proclaim that *Bhagwan* has revealed Himself to him, or *Bhagwan* has blessed him with His vision *(darshan)*. However, this revelation comes only when one completely withdraws one's mind from the external world and only when one also cultivates His noble qualities. To the degree one cultivates and develops these divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan* in his person, to the same degree the food eaten by one will help in the built-up of one's physical body, and one's facial features will also reflect those divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan*.

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DAY 10

In ancient Hindu religious scriptures, sixteen methods of worshipping *Bhagwan* have been mentioned. Offering of food to *Bhagwan* is one of those sixteen methods. When one offers food to *Bhagwan* or God, one's heart and soul must be completely devoted and dedicated in this method of worship. It is improper to offer food to Lord, in a casual and half-hearted manner, or when his mind is preoccupied with tussles and tensions, and when it is tense with negative emotions causing an emotionally disturbed state. One should preferably take rest for a while, wash one's face etc. to become fresh and then proceed to induce peace and contentment by discarding all hostile emotions and negative attitudes. When a person adopting this disciplined way of life, eats his food without any mental tension, it would be regarded as offering of food to *Bhagwan* in a most devoted and dedicated manner.

It is commonly observed that a person starts eating his food as soon as it is served, without getting rid of his mental tensions. Under such a condition, the contribution of the eaten food will be an offering to the demons and devils present in the mind in the form of worldly tensions. This type of food offering cannot be regarded as one to please *Bhagwan*, but instead it appeases the hunger of the demons and devils of jealousy, anger, self-pride etc. which were dominating and dwelling in the mind of a person. Under such circumstances, these indwelling devils and demons of personal vices and weaknesses will not let the person breathe in a normal, healthy manner and his mind will get completely clouded by his indecision and ignorance, which will further not let him energise and activate his inherent previous good impressions *(Sanskaras)*.

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DAY 11

All Sankhya philosophers exhort mankind to investigate and enquire about the ways through which *Bhagwan* is controlling and administrating the genesis and existence of human life; the stage of spiritual evolution a human being has reached, and the direction in which human life is proceeding, besides the basic question regarding the initial creator if any, or whether human life just the by-product of natural, material forces. The more one probes and investigates, the more he will find that everything of the universe is the handiwork of *Bhagwan* and according to His preordained scheme. A man's worldly responsibilities, his awesome mental preoccupations, his restricted life in a smaller social circle, do not let him grasp and understand the all-pervastive, omnipotent and omniscient divine powers of *Bhagwan*. The limited capabilities of a person do not let him cultivate and develop in his person the divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, and he fails to know the ultimate spiritual reality and the supreme spiritual status of *Bhagwan*, in the absence of which he is unable to develop the desired faith *(shraddha)*, devotion and dedication towards *Bhagwan* and his divine qualities.

As a first step, one has to overcome one's limited knowledge of a small social circle, and accept and admit the existence of an all-pervading, omnipotent and omniscient *Bhagwan*, who possesses all the divine qualities and spiritual powers and who is all the time living and leading a life of permanent bliss. Secondly, one should gradually and slowly cultivate and develop in one's person the divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, in one's own way and through one's own method. Thirdly and lastly, as soon as one wakes up in the morning, one should invoke God for protection, and seek His blessings for developing godly qualities in one's person.

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DAY 12

When a person seeks shelter and the protection of *Bhagwan* through the three ways (mentioned yesterday), he automatically starts withdrawing from the mundane world and he also develops the power and the will to disengage his mind from the mundane, external world. To achieve this goal, no special technique or special effort has to be made by a person, except to reign or subjugate his ego which might act as a hurdle. Otherwise it is a simple and sure method to withdraw the mind from the external world.

Thereafter, along with the dedication and one's religious devotion one should start meditating on the divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan*, as one should also carefully observe and monitor one's life- activities, such as how sweetly and gently one speaks to others, how one controls his eating habits, how one behaves and interacts with others, and check whether one's mind ever entertains evil thoughts for others. When one meditates on the inherent meanings of such words as *maitri, karuna, mudita, upeksha, vairagya, santosh, kshama, sheel and sadachar* etc., this meditation on the meanings of such words amounts to worship, veneration and spiritual contemplation of *Bhagwan*. The main purpose of meditation on these words is to mentally comprehend their full and comprehensive import, and thereby to understand if there is any specific effect and internal change in one's attitude and in one's external behavior. For a sincere, committed and devoted worship of *Bhagwan* one must repeatedly engrave in his mind all those words which represent the divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan*. This is called '*paath*' or the method of veneration of *Bhagwan* through the emotive repetition of words, daily as a routine practice.

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DAY 13

Why is it essential to worship *Bhagwan* ? What is the need of recognizing and respecting those persons who are His sincere, committed and dedicated devotees ? These are the thoughts which often come to the minds of human beings. The answers to these questions are very simple. One has just to ponder and recall, when one sees somewhere the divine quality of *'kshama'* (mental tolerance and intellectual forgiveness), or when one witnesses somewhere the divine quality of *vairagya* (dispassion) ? *Bhagwan* cannot be witnessed in the living human form in the present times. Only His divine qualities can be witnessed in some spiritually realized devotees. So, if one witnesses and experiences the divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan* in some living person, one must take it for granted that the Lord has revealed Himself in the human form through that person.

In the tenth chapter of the *Gita*, it is mentioned that *Bhagwan Krishna* told *Arjuna* about his various divine qualities or spiritual powers or His supernatural miracles and mysterious marvels *(vibhutis)* and asked him to concentrate his mind on His *vibhuties*. The word *'vibhuti'* means some specific capabilities. In the present context, the word 'vibhuti' implies the divine qualities and spiritual powers of the Lord. When a person has the capability of quitting all his vices and weaknesses pertaining to his narrow and restricted social outlook, when a person has the capability of acquiring his spiritual goals, and willingly shedding of his selfish interests, it is proclaimed that the person has acquired some specific capabilities, which is uncommon in other human beings. That is to say that the person is blessed with the divine qualities and spiritual powers of God.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Spiritual Ignorance or Nescience *(Avidya)*

The power that hides the nature of an object is called *avidya*. The non-conscious power that hides the nature of the soul as eternal bliss and does not let that bliss be manifested is called nescience. It is also called ignorance, i.e. the power, contrary to knowledge, which turns away or perishes as soon as knowledge is manifested. For instance, the soul of a religious person is hidden by ignorance, i.e. there is no consciousness of it (soul) and that is why he is in pain. When direct experience of the soul is realized after hearing about it and contemplation or meditation on it, the power that hides the soul is destroyed by knowledge. What has been destroyed is called *avidya* or nescience. This is an eternal power. Right from the beginning of the world it lies on the consciousness like a lid. This spiritual ignorance puts a veil on the real self of a living being, which prevents him to regain his real self, i.e. pure consciousness, to experience bliss and permanent deliverance.

It is only because of this nescience that all the fetters of ego, delusion, attachment, aversion, doubt etc. cause suffering to a person. The attainment of the ultimate statement of deliverance means recognition of these fetters and energetically giving them up and finally giving up the fetter of nescience too. Bound by these fetters, a person is called fettered, if he is freed from these fetters, he is known as a liberated person.

Nescience means darkness. When it flows in the mind, it flows only to know some object. Its knowing means the pleasure of experience for the person. When a person feels pleasure, he feels that he does exist. When the mind is hindered or is not experienced, the pleasant ego seems to have been lost. Searching for this ego, a person feels himself in a state of darkness.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) continued...

Avidya

It is the manifestation of nescience that the happiness which one was seeking is almost lost or hidden. When search for worldly pleasure persists in a person he is said to be in a the state of nescience or spiritual ignorance. Now this nescience will constantly would remind him of the pleasure-giving object by awakening a desire to act for possessing that pleasure. Since that pleasure is only will constantly, it is to be acquired through worldly striving. It will be acquired incidentally in a worldly manner, and this nescience will go on making a person be born in this world and then die, and preserve the ego in the world with its pleasures as long as he lives. Similarly, it sets the direction of the flow of birth and death in this world.

If some person awakens his intellect during the flow and during the repeated blows of this nescience and if he realizes all the pleasures of the world are transient and ultimately end in suffering, he has understood that the forces of nescience are pushing him towards worldly pleasures. If the person then through his awakened intellect and right knowledge *(vivek)*, endures the pain caused by the separation from worldly pleasures, retaining his fortitude keeping himself steadfast by realizing that the currents of nescience is like the current of flowing water, and watching like a spectator the desire of old impressions for the pleasures of the world as painful and trivial, in course of time the passion of nescience to fling in the world will weaken and will ultimately be dispelled. As soon as the clouds of nescience are dissipated or get dispelled, the self or the soul as knowledge and consciousness will be manifested in him. After experiencing the everlasting bliss of the soul, there would be no desire in him for any worldly pleasure or association with any worldly person or object.

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DAY 15

There are mainly three methods and means to worship *Bhagwan* : (1) Through complete submission and surrender to *Bhagwan* with full devotion and dedication ; (2) Through inculcating, developing and practising all the divine qualities of *Bhagwan*, and (3) Through worship and veneration of all the spiritually-realized devotees of *Bhagwan*. When the seeker pursues the spiritual path in his life very sincerely and committedly, it is called devotion and dedication to religion.

The meanings inherent in the worship of *Bhagwan* in the form of all-pervading, universal, manifested life indicate that the vast and wide universe of *Bhagawan* is full of divine bliss and spiritual ecstasy. There is not an iota of pain and suffering in the paradise or *Bhagwan*'s divine sphere *(swarga)*. When a person adopts the vast and wide universe of *Bhagwan* by developing and adopting a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude, that person will be introduced to the divine qualities and spiritual powers of *Bhagwan*, and will also develop friendly affection towards all the living beings in the universe. Just as God is uniformly present in all the living beings in the form of divine spirit (divine consciousness), in the same way that person too will accept, acknowledge and experience the same divine spirit (divine consciousness) in all living beings of the universe. Thereafter, all the living beings on this planet earth become members of his family. That person will discard all his personal prejudices and biased attitudes, and he will not experience any worldly agonies and mundane deprivations in the whole universe. Even when the person dies, he will not have a feeling of permanent annihilation or fear of losing his personal identity and existence. As in death, only the physical body ceases to exist, but the divine spirit or soul continues to exist.

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DAY 16

Bhagwan in the form of supreme spiritual consciousness *(Paramatma)* is controlling and administering the whole universe. He permanently dwells in every living being in the form of life or soul (personal consciousness). Life, like a wave, is flowing in the physical bodies of all living beings. Living beings get entangled in a small and circumscribed whirlpool of narrow, selfish outlook (urges and attitude). Because of this narrow, selfish outlook, the person has overloaded his head and heart with innumerable worldly vices and weaknesses.

When a person, gives up all his vices and weaknesses, and instead adopts a liberal and cosmopolitan attitude for humanity at large, it will amount to worship and veneration of the omnipresent and everexisting *Bhagwan*. In reality, it is *Bhagwan* who controls all the human actions and attitudes by granting His divine knowledge to that person. One should thus cultivate and develop in one's person the divine qualities of *Bhagwan* and lead his remaining life in accordance with these qualities. In this way, one's life will become religious and spiritual and one will lead one's life according to the directions of *Bhagwan*.

Quite often, one's present life is dominated by the material values of the external world, which is controlled by the selfish feelings of 'mine' and 'thine', and which is dependent on the persons and products of the mundane world. The material life generates mental fetters, such as desire, anger, greed, delusion and egoism, as well as many other vices. The person selfishly regards his own sufferings as much more painful, grave and intolerable, without bothering to know how painful and grave are the sufferings of other persons are? Such a mental attitude ends up in a selfish, narrow and circumscribed social outlook.

On should sincerely try to inculcate and practise the divine qualities of Bhagwan by loudly pronouncing those symbolic words which personify those divine qualities and also meditating on their exact inherent meaning to eliminate one's negative and evil qualities from the mind.

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DAY 17

The soul *(atma)* is everlasting, eternal and permanent. In order to comprehend and know *atma*, one must delve deep within oneself to that level where 'consciousness' *(chetna)* is dwelling. To that end one has to achieve freedom from the bonds of one's worldly actions and deeds, and as a first step one will have to discard and destroy the chains of one's personal desires. As soon as one renounces one's personal desires, one's liberated mental state will amount to veneration and worship of the all-pervading *Bhagwan*, who has manifested Himself in all the living beings of the universe and who has constituted one unique universal family.

On attaining such level one does not have to engage one's mind for the worship of *Bhagwan*, because such worship means worshipping divine consciousness by divine consciousness, or in other words, both the worshipped and the worshipper are divine consciousness itself. If one is able to enrich and intensify within one's inner self, personal consciousness, then it would indicate that *Paramatma* (supreme spiritual consciousness) has manifested within his '*atma*' (personal consciousness). The word *'Ish'* means 'the capability', which is of two types; firstly to know and fully understand that powr which is beneficial for a person, which means "the capability of divine knowledge", and secondly, to put that divine knowledge into practice, meaning the capability to translate that *divine knowledge* into practical use. It sums up, that to worship *Ishwar* one needs both these capabilities i.e. power of divine knowledge and power of putting the divine knowledge into practical action.

The more your mind turns inwards and cultivates introspection and meditation, the more your mind is getting interested and engaged in spiritual pursuits. The more your mind yearns to know the inner divine truths, the more it is acquiring spiritual education and training.

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DAY 18

In order to achieve emancipation from fetters, and in order to worship *Bhagwan* with complete devotion and dedication, one will have to tolerate some tension, deprivation and renunciation. Along with that one will have to cultivate and inculcate in one all the divine qualities of *Bhagwan*. With the help of meditation and introspection, one will have to enhance, enlarge and enrich one's intellectual capabilities to unravel and understand one's inner, spiritual realities, and determine what is best for one's ultimate well-being. All these factors constitute what is called 'spiritual realisation'. After recognizing and realising one's inner, spiritual truths, if one sincerely and committedly tries to establish these inner spiritual realities in the depth of one's existence then it can be said that nobility, generosity and all other divine qualities have gained a strong foothold in the depth of one's person. Even if one is successful to develop just one divine quality in one's person, one ensures one's spiritual salvation.

One should loudly and repeatedly pronounce those words which symbolize and personify the divine qualities of *Bhagwan*. Along with such loud, spoken reminders, one should meditate on the exact meanings inherent in those words. If one honestly wants to pursue the path of spiritual life, one will have to employ one's higher intellectual faculties as well, just as a person employs his higher intellectual abilities to make his vocation successful in the world. One will also have to cultivate in one's mind congenial emotions and positive attitudes. In addition one will have to control and discipline one's sensual perceptions as well as to protect one's physical-health status. The reality is that one will have to find and evolve one's own methods and means to pursue his spiritual life, taking into account one's inner vices and weaknesses.

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DAY 19

The scriptures have propounded that *dharma* or the religious way of life rests upon three pillars or *stumbhas*, in the same way as pillars support a building. These three pillars of dharma are : Action *(karma)*, Devotion or Meditation *(bhakti or dhyana)* and Spiritual Knowledge *(gyana)*, also referred to as the path of *karma*, the path of devotion and meditation and the path of spiritual knowledge. An individual who wishes to establish *dharma* in his life has to imbibe all these three. When a person becomes determined in performing actions rightly, that is, mindfully, the right meditation and devotion will accordingly arise in him. When these develop appropriately, the experience of the right knowledge of truth will follow. With that will come the ultimate result, namely, freedom from worldly bondages or deliverance from worldly entanglements. The emancipated mind will gather its energy from within. With the help of the energy obtained, one attains the blissful state or spontaneous divine bliss, the highest goal of human life.

The pleasure derived from worldly objects or persons is not everlasting and is transient, and does not provide the person everlasting contentment and joy. Worldly pleasures are bound by certain conditions or causal factors which are constantly changing. As life is everflowing like the river Ganges, so also inside this body, consciousness is also ever-flowing, and so the happiness of a particular span of life will not stay forever. Without happiness, however, the mind cannot feel contented. Whenever it gets happiness, it will keep on pondering over that only. Through right faith, if one's mind starts meditating on one's inner self, there will be no need for one to hanker after worldly pleasures.

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DAY 20

A man in the state of sleep finds happiness within himself. This happiness cannot be attained from any person or object. It is attained by consolidating one's inner self, after kicking away all the worldly objects from it. It is true that the mind and the senses are not awake at that time. The pleasure from sleep is felt only by throwing off worldly entanglements, by setting aside worldly worries. Thus, a person feels happy as long as he is asleep and as long as his mind, full of desires, is not awake. But if his eyes open and desires stimulate him to think about his pending assignments or other objects etc., even his sleep would not be sweet. It means that the spontaneous happiness of the inner self is derived from within the self, without any worldly cause, and that happiness which sprouts from one's own self-consciousness, and not suppressed or affected by worldly desires or worries is everlasting.

If a person is thus liberated from the external world and gets inner happiness while awake, only then he will be comfortable, stable and ever contented. Therefore, the teachers of divinity say that one should search for inner happiness, the happiness of solitude of the inner self, similar to that of sleep. In both these states one is alone. Meditation alone will lead one to that happiness and to the right knowledge of the world. While sitting in solitude, one should meditate within one's own self and note that the mind is absorbed in meditation because the eyes are not wandering in the material world, the ears are not listening to any worldly sounds as they were accustomed to earlier, and similarly the tongue has been deprived of many types of taste. The mind has been circumscribed from indulging in many kinds of company.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Practical Wisdom or Right Knowledge *(Vidya)*

Vidya or right knowledge means understanding an object through the *antaratma* mind and intellect as "this is the object". To recognize the innerself (antar*atma*) which is present in all as knowledge and wisdom *(jnana-vijnana)* is the ultimate right knowledge *(para-vidya)*. What living beings regard as pleasures of objects in the world is only a false knowledge, but to regard them or to experience them as sources of pain is the right knowledge.

Spiritual knowledge or right knowledge means complete understanding of the whole truth about one's own innermost self or soul. Indeed, in the books on salvation, spiritual knowledge alone is considered as right knowledge. Only this knowledge turns a person inward. A thorough understanding of life and soul in a true manner through the knowledge mentioned in the scriptures, and then understanding this life in its widest sense attaining eternal peace of soul without any external support, and renouncing all passions and fetters recognizing them through inner vision, and then understanding and attaining the knowledge of the path of renunciation, and also the knowledge of the virtues of dispassion, forgiveness, austerity, endurance etc.—that are essential for one's well being – all these are pillars which support spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge thus means knowledge of everything about the soul, about the pathways to reach it and ultimately experiencing the soul, has been called '*vidya*' in the holy scriptures. It includes listening, contemplation and meditation. The discriminative thought of what is eternal and what is non-eternal *(vivek)*, reflective thinking *(vichar)*, restrainining of mind *(sama)*, restraining of sense organs *(dama)*, cessation of sense organs *(uparati)*, forebearance *(titiksha)*, faith *(shraddha)*, and the desire for liberation *(mumumkshta)* are mentioned as the means or the steps for acquiring this knowledge in *Vedanta*. Ten great powers like friendship etc., are also meant for this very purpose.

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DAY 22

When one makes progress in meditation and one's mind barricaded from indulging in many kinds of pleasures, company, tastes, sounds etc., does not feel absorbed in solitude and feels a little pain, which has to endured by the individual while maintaining his wisdom. This is called *tapasya* or austerity. It is like how the solitary person endures without anybody's support the pain of illness, headache, and suffering caused by falling down, or humiliation or many other types of pain which cannot be cured immediately by any medicine. One should endure in solitude the pain caused by putting a restraint over the eyes, ears etc. This pain which is not greater than the pain caused by illness, injury, burns etc., is a form of penance or austerity. The eyes should not move in the wrong direction, the ears should not hear anything wrong, and speech also has to be restrained. In this way each sense organ has to be restrained with awareness (of true knowledge) and it has to be practised continuously until it becomes spontaneous and automatic, as a natural impulse. Moreover, avoiding many wrong physical actions like playing cards, meaningless intoxications etc. is self-restraint (samyama). This is *Karma-marga* (the path of action).The mind that is entangled in these wrong actions will never be able to meditate.

The mind will again and again turn to actions that have led it astray. When the mind turns in that direction, think what pleasure it will bring. Visualise that pleasure in the mind and think whether this pleasure will last forever. This pleasure will some day part from one. Then let one face this parting right now. Meditating like this, one should practise living in solitude and increase its duration. Ultimately, spending time like this (in solitude) will not cause any pain. Therefore, one should gradually withdraw one's mind from all wrong actions, and utilise one's time by sitting in solitude desisting from those actions.

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DAY 23

It is not just by sitting in solitude that one's mind will start meditation. Sitting in solitude will certainly make one uncomfortable. Develop the habit of enduring that slight pain. At first, one should watch this pain and then see through it and recognize its nature. Watch it minutely and practise spending time in solitude. A day will come when this pain vanishes by itself and then inner spiritual happiness will manifest, and the mind no longer feels the pain of parting from those material objects. This is a glimpse of the happiness of liberation or deliverance. In this way, enduring this pain is also an action of moving on the right faith.

Tapa means the practice of austerity. When the mind begins to practise some austerity, it will think it is not right, as it is not in conformity with the mind. What is one to do when the mind does not stabilise ? Like a child who weeps and who seeks consolation in an uncomfortable situation, if an adult also behaves, he will remain a slave to material objects throughout his life and will not be able to secure liberation from materialism and he will be forced to leave the world as a discontented soul. Owing to his evil discontended actions and slavishness of his mind to worldly objects and person, he may be born in low forms of life. It is a miserable state that the mind, having become the slave of material pleasures, imposes miseries on itself on having lost those material pleasures. Therefore, it is imperative for a person to learn to live and be by oneself in spite of the pain of having to give up these material pleasures. A day will come when this pain will be transformed into real happiness, as spiritual happiness will manifest itself calming down forever the suffering of loneliness.

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DAY 24

A person who is happy even in loneliness, realises that in any case he has to face this loneliness after death. This suffering caused by loneliness has to be endured like a bitter pill. One should tell oneself to sit in solitude for a few minutes if the mind is restless, even in a state of sickness or headache. This discomfort of sitting in solitude is not as much as that of illness. A man should try to get accustomed to spending time in solitude by exercising self-restraint in this manner. In the beginning, he has to practise austerity and to endure the pain caused by it. In such an initial state one should not think that one can reach deep meditation and that he can reach a state of true happiness. If one falls a victim to the slavery of happiness in the initial stage, one will not be able to trace the whole path of right faith. Those who recite holy verses only as slaves to happiness will never be able to complete their journey of right faith, or *dharma*. Whatever one gets from such a path of happiness is a kind of mirage. This is like a man who takes pleasure in intoxication; but that pleasure is false. Only that happiness is right which is spiritual, spontaneous and permanent.

If one wants everlasting bliss, it has to be earned, implying that one has to keep one's mind pure, by enduring the pain caused by the lack of material comforts. During the state of pain, the intelligence is awakened and an easy way is sought to get rid of the pain. For a seeker of spiritual welfare to perform certain duties and to find spiritual life through the path of the material world would jeopardise his aim. Then the only way left is to understand the reality of the objects to which the mind is attached, and to train the mind according to one's requirement. This practice of austerity itself brings everlasting bliss and also implies an increase in one's awareness.

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DAY 25

The path of *'Dharma'* implies that one should sit in solitude, awaken his wisdom from within and experience it, and inspire one's mind accordingly and thus light the lamp of spirituality. In doing so if one endures whatever little pain one has to, and experiences solitude by renouncing trivial pleasures, that is the path of austerity, and that is his total earning. One who strives in this manner will not face any problem, because there is no spiritual ignorance as long as one meditates and understands, and as such there is no trouble from it.

When the mind is unable to meditate and understand anything and when a kind of darkness engulfs the mind, one will not feel at home in solitude and this is precisely the state of spiritual ignorance. In such a state, the mind is keen to know something but when it gets no knowledge, one feels unhappy because one cannot realise the knowledge embodied in one's individual consciousness. The mind in such a state would like to go to sleep and if it is unable to sleep, it will not feel at home . This has been called spiritual ignorance by the scholars of the scriptures and it has to be recognized in mind. It is the habit of the mind, and as soon as the habit dissolves, the mind is lost in darkness, and this darkness obstructs the person's spiritual awareness, and leads him to the comfort of sleep. If, on feeling sleepy, if he tries to sleep, he is surely following the path of habit.

The mind will keep the seeker entangled in two insatiable passions, the passion for the external world and the irresistible urge to withdraw and sleep after exhaustion by worldly pursuits.

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DAY 26

Elaborating the two insatiable passions (introduced in yesterday's thoughts), it is said that if a person opens his eyes to the material world, then he remains entangled in this material world. But if he closes his eyes to the material world, that is, if he does not think of the material world, gradually he hides himself for relaxation in the darkness. *Bhava* or becoming means living in this world in the company of others and *vibhava* means to be lost in sleep etc., when the company of the world is renounced. It is also a kind of pleasure, sleep appears attractive too, and the mind does not want to be liberated from it. Now one has to make this darkness productive, that is, one has to awaken the knowledge of truth in this darkness which is known as *Krishna* in Sanskrit.

The moment one has restrained one's mind, that is, turned one's eyes a little within oneself, turned one's ears and speech within himself, turned away from wrong actions and the storms of theft and falsehood, and has restrained one's eating and drinking in various ways to keep one's mind pure, and has not thought of any evil, the surplus mental energy suppressed in one's mind will make one restless because life earlier was running smoothly and comfortably while being attached to the material world. The boat was sailing smoothly in the waters of the material world and the time passed in comfort. Turning away from the habit of materialistic life, the first truth one confronts is discomfort. People who tread the path of right faith have to face a little discomfort, not caused by someone else, or by losing something. This is due to the waning of a mental disease undergoing a new treatment, a kind of medicine, if one takes courage and sits for meditation, one's mind attuned to sleep will drag one to lie down and enjoy the comfort of sloth. One has to cautiously endure the pain of resisting sleep and sloth.

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DAY 27

Avoiding worthless deeds and spending time in solitude while keeping awake certainly causes some pain. One has to endure this pain, without wailing and crying, by bringing some peace to the mind by lighting the lamp of right knowledge. The path of pain will bring the whole world into a persons mind and he will not be alone. When the whole world is submerged in his mind through meditation and when he understands the inner spiritual truths, he will not remain alone. When one turns his mind away from materialistic objects and has nothing to meditate upon, the mind retaliates and wants to rush back to the objects of desire to which it was accustomed to, or to sleep. At this point the seeker must not let the mind sleep, but must keep it awake. Gradually he has to renounce the pleasure of sleep for this purpose. Because when the mind is dominated by the pleasure of sleep, one yields to it and let; this pleasure overpower one's mind. It brings sloth and laziness to induce the person to doze off. Resisting sleep is essential, even though it is painful. One must keep on resisting this discomfort for a longer period and one day when one's mind can keep awake for two hours, it will be fit for meditation and concentration without wandering.

Once the meditation has been accomplished, truths of life regarding the purpose, current status and preferred direction of life will be revealed which will help the seeker to achieve everlasting happiness. Man alone can think of all these inner spiritual truths because of the possession of a unique 'intellect' which he can channelise in this direction of right faith. That will lead him to the awakening of right knowledge in himself. This is virtually the birth of Lord Krishna. When this darkness is born, man's resurrection in this darkness will find complete knowledge in himself.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Knowledge of the truth/Truth-bearing knowledge *(Prajna)*

Prajna means the knowledge of truth, the truth which is generally hidden from the ordinary persons. It is attained by going beyond the sphere of sense organs, and by deep analysis through meditation. The knowledge of this spiritual truth is called *prajna (pragna)*. For instance, the pleasure of the worldly objects generally appears to be very attractive to a living being but if this pleasure is deeply analysed in meditation, it will be discovered as the root cause of all suffering. Thus, it is this *prajna*, or truth bearing knowledge that reveals that the pleasure of the worldly objects is the root cause of all suffering.

Prajna means knowledge that has been discovered after research and deep analysis. That which outwardly appears in one form but appears entirely different after deep analysis is *prajna*.

When a person frees his mind from the entanglements in worldly objects and persons and awakens himself from the dark state of sleep, he will enter into meditation. Then he will realize the truth of life : how a person creates pain for himself in the pursuit of pleasures and how he is bound by various fetters and how he may attain freedom from those fetters etc. Many other truths are revealed only by this very truth bearing knowledge *(prajna)*. As a person's mind is purified i.e. as he attains freedom from worldly pleasures, and as he awakens his mind in solitude, and as the duration of meditation increases, and as in it success is attained, the truth bearing knowledge *(prajna)* reveals the spiritual truth of the whole world which helps a person to cross the ocean of life.

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DAY 28 (Long Weekend) contd....

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(62)

On being conscious all mind in all what be it may,
Springs up in consciousness, by its energy's play;
By law of dependence decides it event all,
And seeing thus by right reason in no wrongs mind will fall.

(63)

The same truth, to realise in meditation go deep,
With virtues, forgiveness and charity, peace to keep;
For purity and flawless conduct inspire one heart,
Live for him manifest truth; think others on their part.

(64)

Becomes as one conscious then impulse inherent,
Gives form to stream of life to run by its current;
By moment's reflection reason if intervene,
Take different direction, then, goes it right and clean.

(65)

Deeper as reason goes more whole truth one find,
Neutralised being Nature's will, no impulse comes to bind;
Lead one to such life stream sphere of pure consciousness,
As in sleep in wakeful where its immanent bliss bless.

(66)

What's to prevent is pain, source of wrongs and violence,
Treat if in worldly way, it proves for peace offence;
Replace, then, wrongs by rights, all moment pain prevent,
Till empty mind endure, sure way, they go absent.

(67)

On seat, in meditation, wakeful with reason stay,
See pain, know source of them living in life in its play;
Occupation for whole life unique not bound with age,
Wins with perfect knowledge deathlessness strenuous sage.

(68)

Not if stretch grown much want may no trouble you feel,
Appeased, but outwardly soul-joy does it conceal;
On seat enduring wise you could wait till it go,
In soul unconditioned free bliss will come to know.

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DAY 29

In the beginning, if one performs worship, through right actions, he will be able to meditate only a little. If one's mind is awakened by overcoming sloth and slumber, right darkness *(krishna)* will develop for the awakening of the truth. Whatever one sees and whatever one thinks with one's open eyes in the light of the sun is the thought of worldly (material) interests and is about the life in the company of each other. At that time, at the rise of darkness, one will move away from others and remain in solitude. But at that stage one will be mindful only of one's consciousness as to where one's mind is going, what it is going to do and what its outcome will be. Like this a person should awaken his spiritual thoughts. If his mind keeps away from sleep, it indicates that he has conquered sleep. In such a state, the more one knows, the more that direct right knowledge will prevail upon him and the more it will influence him. He will then automatically develop a special tendency.

In order to enhance this meditation, one has to stop oneself from indulging in wrong deeds like theft, falsehood etc. one has to perform right actions blended with devotion. The mind may feel upset in refraining from such actions, so one has to develop the capacity to endure this pain. Also, one has to restrain his sense-organs from diverting to the external world. As long as the habit of cognition of the material world continues, these inner tendencies do not let a person turn to meditation throughout his life. When he sits alone, the same pictures, seen or imagined earlier, will be revived in the mind. The desire for them will haunt him and their non-fulfilment will give rise to anger. If he abstains from them, it will breed sleep, sloth or laziness.

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DAY-30

If truth is to be realized, knowledge will have to be awakened. The knowledge is awakened when the mind gets kindled in darkness and when it brings out the spiritual truths of life through contemplation. Being rightly inspired by them, the mind will feel encouraged to lead a life in the right direction. The knowledge gained by reading books or by listening to religious discourses from others is static and incomplete. Whatever one listens filters away. The right knowledge, thus, comes from within and manifests itself in the form of spiritual bliss and the person attains everlasting supreme bliss. This is attainable only by those who can awaken intelligence. This intelligence will awaken in darkness (renunciation of worldly passions), that is, after the conquest of sleep. Also this darkness (renunciation of worldly passions) has to be roused. If this darkness (renunciation of worldly passions) is once aroused, it will pervade the whole body, that is, the effect of true knowledge will be spontaneously evoked in the mind. The mind which is so inspired will turn in the right direction. Habits that are removed through such pain will gradually start disappearing. This is because these habits had arisen from pain. As one goes on enduring the pain of parting from them in a phased manner, the whole attachment (with the external world) will disappear. When this pain gradually disappears, the true happiness will suddenly emerge. It is termed as the happiness of the realization of God, the Almighty. If this happiness arises while a person is awake, then he will attain eternal bliss which will never depart.

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JULY

Jnanayoga

Jnanayoga may be simply understood as trying to understand the meaning of existence by a process of thorough enquiry using one's intellect (buddhi) and discriminative faculty (*viveka*). Compared to *bhaktiyoga* and *karmayoga, jnanayoga* is a much more advanced form of meditation. The true jnana yogi is not interested in either devotion or action but exercises all his faculties to understand the cause and purpose of creation, the goal of human existence and the means to achieve it. All great saints including Swamiji are *jnanayogis*. They are people who have penetrated into the depths of life and understood the hollowness of the mundane world. The *jnanayogi* meditates thus: 'The phenomenal world of names and forms is unreal. As long as the mind remains in fetters, it will always wander outside in the material world which is under the grip of illusion *(maya)*. Craving leads to repeated sorrows. The only way out is to control the mind through one's constant efforts by coaxing it to turn away from the transience of the ephemeral world and contemplate on the immortal Brahman'. Thus *jnanayoga* meditation involves the cutting of the knot of ignorance *(avidya)* with the sword of true knowledge *(vidya)*.

Editor

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Day 1



JULY

The Bhagavad Gita speaks of *Karmayoga*, *Bhaktiyoga* and *Gyanayoga* that is, right action, right devotion and right knowledge, which are the three pillars of the religious life. *Karmayoga*, means being completely absorbed while performing action, having full concentration, and restraining the mind which is accustomed to running here and there and going astray. Then one must perform all good deeds, and refrain and renounce the different types of evil actions, done for one's trivial material pleasures. One cannot be a renunciant if one is not willing to renounce material pleasures derived from these evil actions. Therefore, one needs to renounce them to some extent, enduring the pain caused in the process. One must be austere by treating that pain as an opportunity for the practice of austerity, and endure that pain consciously and mindfully.

Thus the practice of *Karmayoga* will gradually blossom as devotion. While practising *Karmayoga*, one comes to know of the wanderings of the mind in pursuit of trivial pleasures and one can check or prevent it. Thus *Karmayoga* alone will acquaint one with the machinations and designs of the mind, that is how it led one to wrong speech, wrong food, over-sleeping, wrong thought, and how it prevented sound sleep owing to these wrong thoughts. This inner awareness of the mind should be taken as the beginning of meditation *(dhyanayoga)*. When the mind turns away from the external world and when contemplates the inner realities and when it starts understanding them, this is known as meditation, and this understanding is called knowledge. At first, it will be termed as meditation *(dhyanayoga)* and then as *jnanayoga*, that is, there will be right knowledge or right faith for one's ultimate benefit.

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DAY 2

One is not aware of one's faults and evils because they are hidden under a veil of darkness. When the mind turns a little away from the world, it instantly starts inducing sleep. If one falls a pray to the cycle of idleness, sloth and slumber, the mind goes to sleep as the eyes, ears etc. are all closed. One is totally unaware during sleep, that is to say, ignorance rules then. During sleep, if darkness is accompanied by awareness, it will give rise to *'Krishna'* manifested as right knowledge. Awakening darkness or giving birth to darkness is called the birth of *Krishna*. If the darkness awakens, the sleep where all evils are hidden disappears. Then, in the light of this knowledge, all inner faults and evils will be clearly visible because the veil of sleep over them is removed.

In the deep darkness of the night, the Sun-god is not there, but the mind is attached to the Sun-god, that is, it is attached to all wordly self-interests, roaming everywhere and retaining all old tendencies. As long as it is awake, it will manifest worldly thoughts. If one does not wish to do so, or in other words, if he does not follow his mind, it will close the path of meditation and knowledge by causing sleep. It will spread deep darkness. This darkness is named *Krishna*, meaning blackness where the capacity to understand or recognize the truth does not operate. In this darkness, the Sun cannot rise but the moon can. It is known on *Janmashtami* day, at the rise of the moon, Lord *Krishna* was born. That moon is the god of the mind. It is said in the *Vedas* that the moon is born in the mind of God. If the mind manifested as knowledge wakes up in this darkness and if it starts understanding to some extent, turning away from the material world, know that Krishna has been born, and the knowledge to reveal inner truths has risen in the darkness.

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DAY 3

Devotion, considered supreme by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita is of two types, *para* and *apara*. *Para* devotion means to observe the same consciousness *(atma)* in everybody as in one's own self, and it is considered superior. Again Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita observes that one should be equipped with true wisdom, as a precondition. As a first step, one should possess enough strength of mind, and with determination one has to purify one's intellect by decimating one's evil actions to lead a life of righteousness. When one wishes to adopt a life of purity even to some extent, the mind used to deriving pleasure from the evil path, will rebel fiercely. With patience and courage one can convince the mind to come to the right track as cheap and instant pleasures lead only to worthless deeds.

In this way one should keep one's intellect pure and guard one's consciousness patiently regulated by principles; right eating, speech, actions, sleeping, walking etc., and one should conduct oneself properly in this world. While doing so, the worldly self-interest will destroy one's efforts, by drawing a veil over one's wisdom and will stop the operation of right intellect. Then the mind dominated by self-interest will tell the person to behave as the other persons do, in a similar way. Now amidst such tug of war if one maintains patience, and keeps on the path of right conduct, one will be able to lead life according to the principles of right faith *(Dharma)*. As has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita* : "one attains cosmic consciousness *(brahmbhav)* only by renouncing pride, power, arrogance, lust and wrath by being at peace within oneself." When one has a great ego in oneself and does not treat others as one's equal and with regard, one depicts individual consciousness *(jivabhav)*. However, when one realizes the individual consciousness in others and equates his individual consciousness with it, he is supposed to have realized cosmic consciousness *(brahmbhav)*.

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DAY 4

Brahman means to pervade all around. He alone who does not discriminate between his own self and that of others reaches that stage. He thinks what is in him is in others, that is, the element that feels pleasure or pain is present in others, too. If he is forgoing his pleasures, tries to be good and helpful to others and if he does not harm others through his behaviour and actions, be sure that he is following *bhaktiyoga*, the path of right devotion. Thus, taking courage in solitude and understanding reality, when he realizes that the same consciousness prevails in all creatures he attains *Brahmabhava*. When there is cosmic consciousness (*Brahmabhava*) towards all creatures, his individual consciousness will attain happiness.

Knowledge is the manifestation of the supreme consciousness. When he realizes in his self that if he is going to indulge in an evil deed and its result will not be good, then know that an element of God has awakened in him that will save him from evil. For this purpose, one has to be austere and a renunciant. This is *karmayoga*, or union with right action. One has to be so alert while performing actions to the extent that one becomes aware as soon as an evil thought enters one's mind so that one tries to turn away from it. *Karmayoga* has to advance so far that the evil is spotted instantly and is avoided while doing right actions. If, in one's heart, one does not wish to cause misery to any creature, if this tendency is in one's mind, it will certainly be manifested in one's conduct and others will understand it, too. They will have love and regard for this person. No action of his will put him in fetters and he will gradually reach the kingdom of Heaven. Such a person does not have to think much about salvation.

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DAY 5

The ultimate aim of human existence is realization of God, on attaining this state of eternal absolute bliss, all miseries end once and for all. The Nature which has created this whole universe, has created pleasures of the type which last for a short period. Man, no doubt, pursues these pleasures, because nature is strong and forcibly pushes him in that direction, but ultimately he finds there is nothing but misery in them.

The life-god *(prajapati)*, who resides in all the human beings, forces the man in the outer world to seek and secure pleasure from the objects which attract him, and which also makes him to run away from what appears to cause pain. Pleasures and pains, too are a part of nature (the force of habits). They give rise to various tendencies; lust and other wrong instincts and passions which distract human wisdom like a storm. Attachment and aversion are created by these very same pleasures or pains along with their progeny; wrong emotions like lust, wrath, etc. Nature means the impulse that is propelling (moving) this universe. Dwelling in each creature, it moves that creature in its own way. If a man moves in the same way, he should realize, that he too is a slave to the force of nature. It has been said in our scriptures that if one has realized this basic truth, one even need not listen to the scriptures. Man awakens his consciousness only to the extent that he realizes his own inner self or he has the awareness of his soul. One will also realize that the path along which nature is leading him or provoking him to traverse will inwardly cause diseases, sorrows and miseries. The path of nature will also lead a person to hostility, confrontation, quarrels, disputes, fears and suspicions. They cannot provide ever-lasting happiness to him. To escape from them, one has to come out of the kingdom of nature and be freed from its slavery.

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DAY 6

One has to endure pain for coming out of the slavery of nature. If nature feels pained at this and if it incites one to the contrary, one may even have to confront nature. God has given so much inner power to human beings that they can awaken their wisdom and that they can understand all the cycles and descriptions of nature. If one has awakened one's wisdom, it is the same as divine wisdom. Man alone has the capacity to awaken this wisdom. It considers both sides of an issue before him and decides like a judge the right and just course. This human wisdom is developed through meditation, through turning one's mind a little away from the material world, remaining in solitude and by overcoming sleep to keep awake. This is called thoughtful wisdom *(mimansa)*, which one has to cultivate.

According to the scriptures, wisdom is of two types : one is prejudiced wisdom and the other is impartial wisdom. Wisdom aligned to nature, which advises one to secure pleasure giving objects, is prejudiced wisdom from which one has to refrain. The second one, the spiritual wisdom, which in the *Bhagavad Gita* has been called objective, rational or unbiased intelligence, determines that truth is only one, whether in one or in others. The wisdom that discriminates between one and others is the power of nature which takes wrong decisions, and which is indeed prejudiced wisdom which binds a person in fetters, through its biased decisions. Thoughtful wisdom on the other hand is impartial, unprejudiced and takes stock of all aspects of the issue, before arriving at any decision. Without discriminating the persons, this wisdom determines wherein lies the ultimate benefit and everlasting bliss, devoid of miseries. It is the manifestation of God, and whatever decision one takes in such a state is called thoughtful wisdom *(mimansa)*, by the sages.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Knowledge (*Jnana/Gyana*)

Knowing about some object is called its knowledge, just as the knowledge of one's soul or of cosmological consciousness is called the spiritual knowledge. When a person realizes his soul or cosmological consciousness manifested within him, it is called the knowledge of cosmological consciousness. One may gain knowledge of some object even by hearing or reading about it but the true knowledge is that which is closely and directly apprehended. For instance, even after being steadfast in one's seat, and after freeing the mind from external objects and after resisting the insatiable worldly passion, one does not wish to forget and renounce the world simply because if one forgets them, one would feel devoid of knowledge and because one's self would fall into the darkness of spiritual ignorance, a state in which mind is very uncomfortable. There is a feeling of peace when a person goes to sleep or when he enjoys himself by hearing or seeing the worldly objects by awakening their impressions but it seems very difficult to feel happy when a person is devoid of his knowledge or when it is hidden.

Deep spiritual ignorance rules in such a state. To overcome that a person should mindfully overcome his sleep, awaken his right knowledge through meditation, be indifferent to the pleasure of insatiable worldly passion and must provide an eternal consciousness that resides with its powers of knowledge and action alike to manifest itself with patience, the state of tension owing to spiritual ignorance may be allowed to pass. He must keep awake experiencing every moment the pain of being devoid of knowledge. Also he must ignore worldly thoughts and external sounds etc. One who respectfully and with restraint practises it for a long time in solitude will experience a true glimpse of that spiritual truth and right knowledge without the veil of ignorance.

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DAY 8

Everyone must arouse thoughtful wisdom in his mind. One has to mould one's life accordingly, through renouncing all evils, adopting all good things and purifying one's mind. This is the first principle of right faith. Three more principles are required along with this thoughtful wisdom. First, there can be no thoughtful wisdom without deep thinking. How can one play the role of a judge unless one develops the habit of concentrating and deep thinking ? In meditation, one will have to think that one's habit of material pleasure says: "Act according to my dictates; it brings pleasure; it will bring sound sleep; all my actions will be proper, and I will be nice to others." But if this habit continues, where will it lead ? Only when a person develops the method of meditation, he will indeed be a right judge of these two types of wisdom.

During meditation, either one feels sleepy or the same old habits trouble him. These habits provoke the meditator time and again to smoke a cigarette or to take a cup of tea and then sit in meditation. If one is unable to concentrate, one feels like listening to some recorded music. No meditation is possible in such a state. For this purpose, thoughtful wisdom must be accompanied by some meditation. Along with meditation, the third principle is that of right efforts which will enable the seeker to turn away from lust and wrath to save himself from wrong habits. Wrath *(anger)* is the result of a desire for the pleasures of nature and an urge to fulfil one's desires. Lack of fulfilment of desires brings wrath. One has to turn away from this wrath enduring the pain in the process. The progress on the right path is possible if one accepts the pain of turning away from these things and adopts austerity and leads a life by renouncing pleasures.

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DAY 9

One needs thoughtful wisdom, meditation and the right efforts to get rid of wrong tendencies. This is called right energy *(veerya)*. This means the courage to do the right thing. When one resists nature (the force of habits), it will retailate in three ways. It will destroy the happiness of his seeker's mind, deprive him of his zest for living and force him to lead a life devoid of love. There is no life without pleasure, and if one loses the zest for living, life becomes a burden. These are three things that sustain human life. If they continue, then one continues to have the desire to live, that is, the mind should be happy, there should be some affection in one's life and one should be carefree.

When the bliss of supreme consciousness (spiritual bliss) is awakened in a person, he will not hanker after outer objects nor will he agree to be a slave to other creatures and objects. There are three conditions for a spiritual life : (1) One must have inner happiness, (2) Zest for life should be sustained (3) One should be indifferent to favourable or unfavourable objects and circumstances. If the mind is always rankling because a certain creature or object causes misery and one wonders how one will lead a smooth life in its presence, and if the mind remains irritated because of them, then one should know that he is not detached. Detachment means a carefree nature, of not being affected by any creature, object or situation. In Sanskrit it is called *upeksha*. The zest for life and happiness of mind will not be there if the mind is always in a state of fear, and if the indifference to joys and sorrows is lacking. If one moves on the path of right faith and if one listens to that wisdom which is the manifestation of God, this impartial wisdom will bring one the ultimate benefit and relieve one of all sorrows, that is, it will bring deliverance, and everlasting bliss.

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DAY 10

The thoughtful wisdom will not serve its purpose until the inner darkness is not awakened. When one turns his mind away from the world, this outer mind moves one towards sleep and spreads darkness. That sleep appears sweet and lovely to one and one is instantly ready to embrace that sleep. One is unable to overcome sleep. After the sleep is over, the mind will again awaken wrong tendencies. In that state, if there is an awakening of one's mind one has to decide whether there is an ultimate benefit or not in being subservient to the wrong tendencies. Then the knowledge that will arise will be the manifestation of Lord Krishna. Therein lies the real incarnation of God. All the eight forces of nature are there. The seeker has shut himself to the outer world of his eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin which causes vision, sound, smell, taste and touch. The sixth is the ego and the seventh is the wisdom attached to it. But the eighth is the darkness in which all of them hide themselves and it manifests itself in sleep. Sleep is the manifestation of darkness or ignorance. The mind with all these entanglements is lying in the darkness. The moment one turns away from the first five and one's intellect is also indifferent to the good or evil in the outer world, he awakens in this darkness, that is, one identifies and overcomes the wrong tendencies hidden in them, the right knowledge will arise and one will clearly discover what is beneficial and what is harmful. Thus here is the manifestation of God. This right knowledge will put him out of this trap of the material world.

Without disinterested conduct, that right knowledge which can sustain him will never be awakened, unless the right knowledge is awakened and the demons within him are destroyed, the demons of lust and wrath will tempt and provoke him ceaselessly.

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DAY 11

There are seven aspects of perceptible right knowledge : (1) There should be happiness of mind, (2) Zest for life must be maintained, (3) There must be indifference to objects and situations that irritate the mind, (4) Mindfulness, (5) Right efforts, (6) Meditation, and (7) Thoughtful wisdom. These will bring along happiness and zest for life, and the mind will be indifferent to the pain caused by its opposition to nature.

The seeker who embarks to discipline his life in this manner, will be greatly benefitted by a reminder to the fact that right faith rests on three pillars, referred earlier too. The first is *karmayoga* (right conduct), then *bhaktiyoga* (right devotion) and after this is the *Jnanayoga* (right knowledge). Through *karmayoga* one has to be always conscious to avoid wrong deeds. A disinterested action implies doing things whole heartedly, and not with a lost mind, and after turning away from all insatiable desires and passions etc. If there is complete concentration on this disinterested *karmayoga* it will be transformed into meditation, meaning performing all actions with complete concentration. All the actions of such a person will be concentrated and all his life will be a manifestation of *dhyanyoga* (right meditation). He will always dwell in himself as also in the omnipresent God.

Performance of every action wholeheartedly, that is, with alertness of mind and intellect is known as mindfulness or presence of mind. One must develop the habit of performing actions unhurriedly. Action will be spoilt in a hurry, disturbing normal breathing, and the functioning of the heart and other vital organs. One who can lead one's life by restraining the wrong tendencies of mind in every situation is truly mindful.

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DAY 12

One who can lead one's life by restraining the wrong tendencies of the mind in every situation is truly mindful. Performing all actions while keeping the senses in control is the first pillar of *karmayoga*, and one should develop the habit of performing actions by being constantly attached to this mindfulness. When one develops the habit of restraining the wrong tendencies while living in this world, then the same will happen when one occupies one's seat in solitude. While sitting in meditation, the same right thoughts will arise and in the same way one's mind will be awakened. If one overcomes one's sleep too in the right way, then this *dhyanayoga* (right meditation) will be successful. Unless there is deliberate renunciation of all fetters and wrong tendencies, one's mind will not be restrained, that is, it will have no peace in solitude.

Meditation will start with *karmayoga* and one will realize oneself when one performs actions being attached to meditation. When the ignorance is dispelled, know that right knowledge has stepped in. One will then know how wrong tendencies decide and entangle one and how one attains happiness by turning away from them when confronted. All this is inner spiritual knowledge. For this life with right faith, one must have devotion to God even in the outer world. One has to develop a force in oneself to forgive the sins caused by others as also endure consequential miseries. If one can be awake by being free from the entanglements of life outside and the numerous insatiable passions, one will arrive at the 'kingdom of heaven'. There is infinite peace there and an all miseries come to end.

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DAY 13

Right knowledge, thus, has seven different aspects which bring right inspiration. The inspiration that one gets from books and right association is only a form of faith, which will not bring right faith to its fulfillment. Efforts will have to be made for it. One has to devote himself to these seven aspects. (1) one must have thoughtful wisdom, (2) develop meditation, (3) have mindfulness, (4) right energy, (5) zest for life, (6) happiness of mind and (7) indifference to miseries and pain caused by confrontation with wrong tendencies. The ship of right faith will then sail smoothly on this path.

For this purpose, one should avoid all wrong actions, turn away from all sins, restrain oneself while eating, drinking, speaking, moving, associating with others, enjoying the pleasure of the company of others, whether of objects or creatures. All this is *karmayoga* (right conduct). In performing it, one needs to identify the wrong tendencies, remove them while enduring their inflicted pain. This will help one in meditation. One should have compassion for others who face miseries, who impelled by nature, rush to seek pleasures in the objects and persons of the external world, without right knowledge. Forgiveness does not mean only to grant pardon to them but also to endure some pain and being at peace with oneself. One has to restrain the mind and intellect even while enduring some pain.

There is only one dynamic consciousness and His divine dynamism impels everybody. It is His nature that moves all. One must keep oneself focused on Him. That is true devotion to God. One will attain the bliss of the same God when one turns away from wrong tendencies and shatter all the fetters while gradually enduring pain.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Meditation /Spiritual contemplation *(Dhyana)*

Dhyana or meditation means focusing oneself constantly or continuously in some direction or on some object i.e. the mind must not go to anything else but the object of meditation, and there must not be any doubt, nor any desire. lust, anger, irritation and sloth etc. which may weaken the knowledge of the meditating mind. When the mind is constantly focused on some object, the knowledge of complete truth of that object, will be attained. This knowledge is called *Prajna* or truth bearing knowledge.

As has been pointed out earlier, if the insatiable worldly passion is present in the mind, the memory of the object of that passion flows in the mind, and the lack of that object seems to cause pain. One must meditate on this pain to know the truth. When the mind is not distracted in any other direction, or by other objects, and keeps awake without sloth or sleep, and experiences that pain in a waking state and is steadfast in the waves of that pain, in a waking state without doubt, fear, anger, desire etc., it will be meditation over the insatiable worldly passion. The seeker should know that these passions are of two types: (1) *bhavatrishna*, i.e. to be something or the other is the worldly passion and is a manifestation of *rajoguna* (2) *vibhavtrishna,* just opposite to the previous one, is non-worldly passion representing *tamoguna*. Both these forms of the insatiable passion, fetter a person by tempting with pleasure. A person must dispel both worldly and non-worldly passions by awakening his intellect through right knowledge. Thus, after ignoring sleep and pacification of worldly passion, the pain of passion too would go away, and the intellect will be awakened to search the spiritual truth.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) contd...

Dhyana

As long as the mind remains absorbed in worldly objects and in their transient pleasure, the sitting in meditation is not steadfast and does not bring any happiness to the seeker. But with the eyes of right knowledge one realizes that the pleasure of passion is alloyed with pains. As soon as one turns away from them, the quality of dispassion brings peace to one's mind. The soul is then steady in that peaceful mind and free from the fetters of wrong view, doubt, desire, attachment, aversion etc. caused by passion, and at last the soul will be established in the self and will be blissful.

Realizing that passion is the root cause of pain and that its renunciation through right efforts and meditation will be a manifestation of the experience of self and of cosmological consciousness and that ultimately it would lead to supreme peace, one must sit in meditation for as many hours as feasible. To completely uproot passion one must remain sitting in meditation even after overcoming it, keeping a watch over the pain and also keeping the mind in a state of equanimity and one's intellect awake. All this is a kind of practice of inner yoga. One's mind will be in great bliss in such state of meditation *(sankalpa-samadhi)* and ultimately passion too will be overcome when its pain is dispelled. That very mind would experience the joy of freedom from passion and if a mind, steadfast in that joy, finds peace even in emptiness, finds bliss in a state without thought and understanding, it will be known as the state of thoughtless meditation *(nirvikalpa-samadhi)*. This is the manifestation of complete fulfilment.

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DAY 15

Meditation is the main source of right devotion which is considered as one of the three pillars of right faith *(dharma)*. The devotion will progress well if one discovers the correct method and skill of meditation. Then knowledge too will be accomplished, that is to say, it will be attained through devotion. One must find a method for contemplation, meditation and concentration of the mind, which usually strays in the material world, owing to its vested interest.

If one applies one's mind by following the path of right faith and if one tries to understand the truth, one can realize God who dwells in our mind and who manifests as truth. Its bliss is so natural, spontaneous and causeless that if once attained it will never be lost. On attaining this bliss, a man is certain that now even death does not exist. Only a man devoid of right knowledge feels that he has died. The infinite knowledge of God is never ending. This Lord of consciousness does not sleep even if one goes to sleep. This consciousness in one's body is ever awake, even during sleep, and it performs all physical functions of one's body, like breathing, beating of heart, digestion of food etc. As this consciousness is awake during sleep, it keeps awake in death and dissolution. But persons go to sleep before attaining this consciousness, that is, they are not at all aware of that consciousness. This is the veil of ignorance or lack of right knowledge. It means that God manifested as bliss is hidden behind this ignorance. When one is not aware of God within, one only thinks that knowledge lies only in the outer material world and hence one tries to derive it through association (attachment) with creatures and objects. Such people only think that there is nothing worthy of possession except the objects and creatures of this universe.

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DAY 16

One must realize that the outer material existence is of a limited measure and that it is bound to come to an end. Therefore one's eyes must open to God who dwells within one and every person, and who is eternal, never ending. But the temptation of life and sleep do not let the eyes of right and distinctive knowledge to open, that is, the childish mind rushes towards the outer material world (*bhav-trishna)*. Tired of this world, when the mind returns, it goes towards lethargy, sloth and sleep (*vibhav-trishna*). If one can overcome both the types of obstructions, that is, develop the capacity to overcome them, if one can gradually, one's inner eye opens out to God within oneself and one will start becoming conscious of it. Then he will know how much alive every moment of divine consciousness is.

God arises within every person every moment, that is, He is visible and invisible in turn. This hide and seek drama has been variously described in the religious scriptures, but one cannot understand the full impact of it until one perceives this divinity in oneself. One then realizes that it is very pleasing, attractive, fascinating to the mind, and that it is the only one to permanently dispel human miseries. To realize this great sublime drama one has to transcend with some effort the two insatiable passions, *bhav-trishna* and *vibhav-trishana* which one has been accustomed to since childhood.

There are six movements of this visibility and invisibility of God. Those who know them have observed that when God rises as the first wave, He manifestly creates the earth, water, fire, air, sky and emotions within the human mind and then dives down after shattering these six—and becomes invisible in six movements. In this way, this divine unending drama of God has been going on, since time immemorial.

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DAY 17

When one looks within to watch this divine dynamism, or drama within himself, he will find how every moment the conscious mind breathes in and breathes out, that is, inhales and exhales. When one breathes in, there is a particular type of movement and when he breathes out, there is a different kind of movement. If one observes one's heart during these movements, one will find that one's heart beats (expands and contracts) eight times in one breath. When it contracts, it spreads the blood to all the organs by squeezing all the blood out of itself. When the heart expands, it sucks into itself all the blood but nobody comes to know of this movement of the heart. The divine electrical energy is the cause of all these movements.

This entire universe, including the creature and the creator, is conscious. If one looks within his body, here too the earth, the water, fire, air and sky are there and all are moving round and round. Along with these five is God of knowledge. These very six are its movements. One may derive the happiness of watching this divine drama only when one's inner eyes open to these subtleties. But one falls asleep while arriving at this subtlety. Whenever one wishes to be awake, the mind, in the state of perplexity, will continue to move outside due to spiritual ignorance.

For the stability of mind, if a person keeps awake in solitude by evoking right knowledge in himself, it will be the first step on the path of meditation and this also will develop detachment towards the outside world. This has been observed in the Gita, such stability of mind comes through renunciation and practice.

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DAY 18

Realising that all these worldly pleasures will ultimately end in terrible miseries, one should strive to keep one's mind away from them and maintain an attitude of dispassion. Practice means making efforts. Fixing the mind in one direction again and again is called practice. The mind wishes to avoid moving within, and the force of one's habits constantly pushes one's to the outer material world. In such a state one has to turn his mind again and again one's his inner self. This struggle certainly causes pain. No right action can be performed in the world without enduring pain and one has to patiently endure it in one's pursuit of achieving dispassion through practice of austerity, on the path.

For this purpose, one has to make right, earnest and persistent efforts in one's daily life. One has to cultivate the habit of doing everything wholeheartedly even if it is a trivial physical action. If one can concentrate one's mind on any one action, then he has attained a method to meditate. If one wishes to acquire the knowledge of meditation, to worship and to realise God through meditation, and to visualise through right devotion the same consciousness pervading the whole universe, first of all he should train one's mind and mould one's life to become contemplative and fit to realise all the right knowledge within oneself. Right knowledge is acquired through meditation. Right learning means right knowledge, and ultimate knowledge is the knowledge that God dwells in every body and that He moves the whole universe. His divine drama is so attractive and interesting that when once one sees it, nothing more seems to remain for one to attain. When one is aware of God every moment, that means his knowledge of His presence in the mind is everlasting. If one's eyes remain open till that moment, know that one has realised God.

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DAY 19

Nothing except the individual consciousness is so desirable and interesting. This is the most desirable object in the universe. When it prevails inside the body, it is called soul. When it pervades the whole universe, it is called God. Consciousness appears separate in the form of 'you' and 'I' but that is not the reality. Consciousness is one and the same and it pervades the whole universe.

There is no 'You' or 'I' in the subtle, divine drama that takes place within. Also it is not limited to any particular individual but it takes place in the whole universe, in all living beings, alike in all which one has to experience and realise. Different types of processes take place in each organ and the children's bodies growing every moment through the waves of its conscious knowledge. When one sees this divine drama in meditation, it will have nothing to do with one's actions or achievements. One has only made efforts to shatter that veil of ignorance that used to hide it by being awake through liberation from the fetters of the whole universe. As the veil of ignorance is shattered, the inner eye of truth open and whatever there is will be visible. Then one experiences what is being played inside. All this is inner right knowledge. How attractive and interesting, perplexing and captivating this consciousness is ! One will also learn how this universe works. All this one will know when one's mind is accustomed to concentration. But the mind, which is prone to wanderings in the outside materiel world, is not accustomed to concentration, and is repeatedly tempted to run in the outside material world, when one ventures to develop the habit of concentration, sitting for a while in solitude. If one thus trains one's mind while keeping awake, and if one learns to perform even one action whole- heartedly one will perform all actions with stability and concentration.

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DAY 20

Stability and concentration are the essence of meditation. So, whenever one does something, one should do it very carefully being fully awake, during the action, watching where the mind is running. One has to maintain the attitude that he has to work whole-heartedly conscious of one's actions. Right from getting up in the morning, one has to do all actions dutifully with love and devotion. If one develops the habit of doing a job whole-heartedly and when his mind is steadily fixed on an action, happiness will manifest itself in that steady mind. This is *karmayoga* (right conduct).

As one has watched one's mind while doing an action, similarly, while one is seated, one has to watch where one's mind is wandering. If one feels discomfort and pain, one should be conscious of it and dispel that pain by chanting some name of God. One should not sleep out of lethargy or laziness. One should know that attainment of concentration, meditation and right knowledge in his life is impossible until he is freed from the shackles of the insatiable worldly passions which keep him chained.

All activities of the outer material world are attached to two insatiable passions, which govern the mind and which lead it astray. These are excessive desires and fear of miseries. One's excessive desires lead to immense self-interest in the world. That is why one's intelligence is not duty bound. The mind is more afraid of miseries, and as a consequence either turns to sloth or sleep, or wants to remain fettered by objects and persons which-who have provided him pleasure at one time or the other. Whatever be the desire, whether for pleasures or for dispelling miseries, one should identify them and strive to detach them from one's conduct, and initiate right action with devotion. Also one should not allow the mind to wander. Then this action performed devotedly would become *karmayoga* (right conduct).

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend) contd...

Meditation *(Dhyana)*

The sphere of meditation is very vast. When a meditator attains freedom from the trap of passion or its bewilderment, this meditation passing through various fields will arrive at a state of full freedom. For instance, meditating on the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and sky, he would go beyond the meditation. Similarly, sound, touch, form, taste and smell, bewilder a person in meditation. The meditator may realize their essence too and may proceed further by overcoming them with a dispassion for them. Then he may appear to be fettered in the sphere of mind, intellect, ego or nature. But an energetic and watchful meditator, realizing the bondage of these fetters through his meditation, proceeds further enjoying the attained knowledge. He remains absorbed in meditation while experiencing all fetters like spiritual ignorance, ego, bewilderment, love of forms, love of the formless, doubt, wrong view etc. and realizing them as manifestation of pain and by experiencing the pain of their tension. He also remains steadfast in pure knowledge and bliss dispelling the impulses caused by the fetters of the world every moment, and watching them like a spectator. These fetters have a tendency to turn a person towards the object or person of that passion by making him a patient through the fear of pain. Moreover, these fetters do not let him realize their pain because the pain is concealed by a veil. A meditator must remove that veil through meditation, overview that pain and must not let the mind move towards the world. This is the sure way to overcome the worldly passion *(bhava-trishna)*. He must remain steadfast in watching the pain of that passion, treating it as a kind of medicine, remaining a spectator and must not feel any discomfort. He will also attain *Kayayoga* - yoga of the body i.e. the integration of the straying mind with the body to reveal many inner experiences.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend) contd...

Meditation (*Dhyana*)

As the seeker progresses in meditation, gradually this world disappears in a miraculous way. The meditator is relieved from the fear of death by having a vision of God manifested as cosmological right knowledge and earns the knowledge of endless spheres *(anantaloka)* including the coveted spheres of *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh*. This is the ultimate realization and attainment, and his truth-bearing knowledge, intellect and understanding reach fulfilment. Only, this realized and experienced meditator, through his ten great powers observing restraint in himself, lives like others among them. However no fetters etc. keep him bound. All this is the greatness of meditation.

The pleasure of fulfilment of a passion through association with the objects of that passion will only be for a shortwhile because passion is a power of nature that bewilders a person by tempting him with its appearance before him. Resistance to nature appears painful. If some person is afraid of this pain, tempted by this ephemeral pleasure he will waste his present life in association with the object or person and will never attain spiritual truth, and as a result, instead of those pleasures, only diseases, old age, depression, sorrow etc. will come to him. Such a person will remain entangled in the cycle of birth and death in this world.

A person must so prepare his mind by listening to the knowledge of spiritual truth, by discovering it in scriptures, by attaining truth bearing knowledge *(prajna)* through his intellect and right efforts that he may endure the pain of that passion in meditation as explained earlier and through right knowledge keep himself under restraint and control, and attain the power to dispel the pain of passion by watching it like a spectator. Then his mind will be assimilated in the soul to enjoy bliss.

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DAY 22

Following the example of Arjuna's one pointed attention to shoot a hanging sparrow's wagging tail with his arrow, set on a distant tree by his famous and learned guru Dronacharya, one should perform all his actions whole-heartedly and lead his life in accordance with the discipline outlined in the scriptures for *karmayoga* (right conduct). Lust comes as a great obstacle in one's path of right conduct. Lust, which appears lovely and attractive, is an irresistible craving for the pleasures one enjoyed in the past and continues to engulf one now. By performing actions bereft of desires and selfish interests, one transforms every action into spiritual devotion, and fully reaps the fruit of meditation. Therefore, whatever action one preforms, one's mind must be focused only on that, just as Arjuna's mind was totally focussed on hitting the target. Thus rekindled by right conduct *(karmayoga)* the hitherto dead or inert mind is transformed into a fully conscious immortal mind devoid of fetters, sleep, sloth or indolence, and only everlasting awareness persists in it.

In that everlasting consciousness, there are only glimpses. When, at that moment one's inner eye is opened, there will be infinite right knowledge. One's eyes open to the supreme consciousness only when the eyes of right knowledge open inside one, and one begins to understand what lies within, *karmayoga* is a simple path to this. One does not have to renounce any object, or one's worldly duties and social obligations. But one has to necessarily renounce his self-interest in the action, on this path. Also one must keep away from all evils, viz. cheating, deception, theft, sin, falsehood etc., in order to lead a life of meditation.

The scriptures instruct one to attain liberation from the fetters of nature in his pursuit of God realisation. If one does not prove this by one's own life, then narrating things read or heard from the scriptures is a mere display of ego and a sheer waste of one's precious life.

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DAY 23

All evil lies in human nature. It means the formation of a habit. A repeated action becomes a forceful habit inside and it is called nature. An act becomes forceful by doing it repeatedly and one develops the habit of doing it. It is called nature or the force of habit. In Sanskrit *aadata* (habit) means, *aa+datta i.e* (accepting the given position) that a man has accepted from all sides. Habit gradually becomes a fetter and to come out of it, one has to be conscious every moment. When doing all the right actions, when one's eyes open out to right knowledge one is able to identify the worldly fetters and one turns away from them, this is a sure sign that the process of one's deliverance has started.

Whatever is said or heard is only for inspiration. Whatever has to be done has to be carried out by oneself. One has to raise the level of his consciousness to a level which provides its own solution. Then every action will be blissful to one. All this has to be gained by right actions. Nothing is achieved by just studying or listening.

Only by realizing God to some extent, devotion for Him develops. Devotion is strengthened further through meditation, i.e., concentration of mind in all places, and performing actions whole-heartedly avoiding worthless obstructions. In this way, through perseverance, inner knowledge will be attained by the seeker, when he trains himself to treat joys and sorrows with equanimity. It is at this moment that God manifests His visible and invisible drama. One will attain so much happiness and interest from the divine drama that one sees within oneself, that one's mind will be absorbed in it. One is liberated from this material world in this state of meditation and is unaware of death, that is, the fear of death comes to an end. As long as one does not realize that blissful moment, the value of right faith is very insignificant in one's life. For the success of meditation, one has to develop one's life that it becomes a life of right faith, that is spiritual life. On attaining the right knowledge of truth, there is nothing but everlasting bliss.

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DAY 24

In order to attain an identity with the conscious soul which dwells within, which is omnipresent, blissful, unconditional and without association, without any outer material object, one has to resort to meditation. Contemplation with a concentrated mind, devoid of distractions of surrounding objects, is called meditation. Man has the privilege to sit in meditation. If a human being follows the right principles, and if he can restrain himself, he can rest in peace and ignore the material world. Ignoring the material world means to focus the mind on one object as the jeweller does while assessing a diamond. Who is the diamond here except the supreme consciousness i.e. God ? One may call it individual consciousness. Now, how is one to focus his mind on it ? Of course, it does dwell in the body. At first, one has to focus one's eyes within one's body. If at that time, sloth and indolence invade, one has to dispel them and also dispel wrong view, doubt, desire, anger etc. Dispelling these in this way, one has to keep awake and not a fall into sloth, indolence and sleep. If one, thinking that one has nothing to do, enjoys leisure, and if one also starts enjoying sleep mentally, his meditation will be distracted and if one is lost in worldly thoughts, the meditation will cease. Like an efficient jeweller, one has to concentrate on one's job by removing the five obstacles on the path of meditation, namely wrong view, doubt, desire, anger and sloth, indolence and sleep. When one learns to see steadily within oneself after removing these five obstacles, then one will start realizing the inner truths.

Otherwise, it may be distracted sometimes by wrong view, sometimes by doubt or desire or the mind may sometimes be driven to anger, blacking the view leading to awakening of one-self. It is of course in one's body and will at first be visible inside the body.

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DAY 25

According to Hindu scriptures there are five sheaths covering the soul:

(i) Sheath of pleasures : The first is the sheath of pleasures. Sometimes there is joy and sometimes sorrow. If one is disturbed by that sorrowful mind, the soul will not be realised.

(ii) Sheath of worldly knowledge : The mind may be devoted to understand the various objects of the world and that is the sheath of worldly knowledge. If one keeps on thinking of worldly objects, the soul will not be realised.

(iii) Sheath of worldly desires : If one falls a victim to the fetters of the mind, of desire, anger, greed, affection, decisions, resolves, alternatives or thoughts of aversion, it is known as the sheath of worldly desires. In such a case, the soul will not be realised.

(iv) Sheath of respiration : Still further, there is breathing. Sometimes it rises, sometimes it is lengthened or shortened and if the mind is distracted by it, meditation will cease.

(v) Sheath of food : In the body, sometimes the air gets blocked or something else happens. If one falls into this fetter, even then the soul realisation process will suffer.

These five sheaths cover the soul. The body comes in the way just like respiration, mind, intellect, joys and sorrows. But keeping away from these five, one has to gradually ignore them, during meditation. Talking to one's mind, through positive utterances like: "O brother, this is the body. Inside it, there is a substance that is running this physical machine very subtly. Look for that energy." Philosophers call this utterance the counter-argument to awaken the mind.

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DAY 26

The ancient sages and philosophers have said that if for some reason the consciousness is not aroused and if the counter argument technique has not worked, one must get hold of atleast any one word of divine name *(nama)* : 'Om' 'Rama' 'Shiva' etc., to awaken one's mind with its help. If one remains quiet and starts enjoying the pleasures of sleep, his mind will be trapped in social, personal and impersonal worldly matters. To remove them, one should visualize that God, the great father, is sitting at the top, manifested as bliss, is unique and that He is running the machines of all bodies, of the universe. It is His name that one is uttering. If the body comes as an obstacle, he must think it to be a composite mix of clay (earth), water, heat, air and sky, and then gradually start watching the mind.

While watching the mind one observes that it does not remain steady, sometimes something occurs in it and at other times another thing. One must keep on watching and spend time to observe these occurrences. Sometimes anger arises, sometimes fear or doubt, on other occasions one's intellect may start deciding the worth of worldly objects while thinking about them. One has to step beyond the thought of the world, which is not a spiritual reality. In the process his mind may feel pain and be lost in pain. Also one may be allured by sleep and sloth, which again is not spiritual reality. That is a kind of energy which is different and beyond all these things, but which prevails in them too. While thinking like this, like a jeweller, one shall have to open one's eyes to that subtlety and then one will be oblivious of the body, just as one is oblivious of it in sleep and when one is oblivious of the surrounding things and of breathing too, and the mind also, turning away from these material objects, starts awakening a little and starts enjoying pleasures.

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DAY 27

When thus in meditation one starts experiencing joy, the ego is awakened. One has to tell one's mind to look further, even beyond that joy as it is not everlasting. In this way, while keeping awake one's mind in subtlety, one will be introduced to true spiritual bliss. This introduction will be unique, as one will not be aware of his body, mind, intellect, sense organs, or breathing, though they will not be absent. Spontaneously one will realise that He is managing the affairs of the universe, from the large movements of air in the sky to small breathing movements of air in all living beings , through His mindfulness and right knowledge of which the Lord is the storehouse.

So, for the awakening of the mind to apprehend reality, one should free oneself of the dominance of sleep (sloth) as also form the pre-occupations in the material world, by curbing desires, the chief cause of entanglement. Moving ahead in meditation, one has to look within and for that one's eyes must open only to that spiritual reality and must turn away from other objects. When one turns to look within, the five sheaths i.e. respiration, mind, intellect, joy and sorrow, come in the way. He should be keen on realization. These may come and go, but one must keep on watching this movement like the waves that rise in the sea and ebb, none of which is lasting. It is only the right knowledge that continues to flow like water in these waves. Similarly, there is a variety of waves in the mind. One feels something at one time, and something else at another time. These are individual waves and all are related to the material world. One has to move into its subtle nature, keeping only that knowledge in one's mind and not to let the mind wander anywhere, and then examine one's experience.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Divine Merit (*Punya*) and Sin (*Pap*)

Punya or divine merit is the name of that quality *(Dharma)* of mind that produces happiness. All those actions which produce happiness in the present and in future are called divine merits. Similarly, there is a subtle state of divine merit that moves one forward towards the bliss of salvation and the divine merit includes restraint of the body, sense organs, mind and intellect. The divine merit that arises from this restraint ultimately leads to the attainment of salvation. If such a person of divine merit has no desire or passion of any worldly pleasure, he will easily eliminate all his sins and will move forward on the path of salvation and will attain it.

Pap or Sin, on the other hand is that inclination of the mind that in subtle or invisible forms dwells in the mind and that causes pain to a person. Sin is the result of various kinds of wrong actions, through lack of restraint of sense organs, of intellect and of mind. One can escape misery *(durgati)* or extreme pain by avoiding these sins. Whatever misleads the human intellect and whatever does not let it even think or understand its true interest, is a sin. Whatever hinders right path and meditation is a sin. The level of human intellect falls when he loses the power to think and judge what is right or wrong when one implelled by tendencies like desire, anger etc., loses the power to think and judge what is right or wrong and wherein one's true interst lies. If a person is suffering right till the end despite being a human being, it is also a state of degradation *(durgati)* like animals, birds, worms and insects which lack the intellect of a human level. If a person avoids all those sins by maintaining the human intellect, he will be reborn as a human being and ultimately by keeping himself pure will move on the path of salvation and at last will attain liberation.

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DAY 28 (Long Weekend) Contd. ...
Verses of Divine Spiritual Life

(69)

Impulse the force you learnt to resist though with pain,
You knew to taste, the pain with reason for your gain;
Endured they on seat bless with power inherent,
For intelligent efforts with their cause to prevent.

(70)

Don't be moved as it moves, nor make for what it shows,
By-pass in mind, on face, torture it spread to know;
Stay wise, worn bit by bit, vanish itself all pain,
Unconditioned freedom, unique bliss in soul gain.

(71)

Spiritualisation consists in charging one's being right,
By revolving, feeling truth in mind with insight;
Disappear wrong intention with all wrongs in sequence,
Seek right stays so long weak endurance in silence.

(72)

In organisation of world 'to be' flows wish,
With it, then, 'not to be' with its play all selfish;
Universal, elemental, expressed as self in all,
Responsible for all deeds; see: save yourself from fall.

(73)

In itself consciousness blissful lives, as in sleep,
Not be, if, chained outside, the same wakeful state keep;
Not being that, one feels want with being in non-delight,
'Tis for these inner ties men live in struggle and fight.

(74)

Not with them real one's joy, nor, prevention of pain,
For which they most invite lays on that violent strain;
Appear mere being conformed will have soothing effect,
But, they being followed full grow worse ill to project.

(75)

Woeful is all their tale, confine they with constraint,
One can't go lightly free, can practise no restraint;
Not fail, make fall in wrongs; not let reason prevail,
Not hail if spiritual life no blessed breath one inhale.

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DAY 29

If one wants to have complete liberation from desires, one has to struggle against them and endure pain in the process. This will require whole-hearted efforts to develop the habit of concentrating the mind on soul (consciousness). One has to concentrate on performing whole-heartedly each and every action, even routine ones, or listening, or watching, or peeping at something, or at somebody, even reading a book, whole-heartedly. One may not find some actions interesting, and one's mind may shirk and wander here and there. One should not allow the mind to wander and force it to concentrate. For this, one has to practise some austerity.

The mind is steady if something is interesting or tasty, but no aptitude is developed for the soul. When, one develops the attitude for it and when one attains bliss, then it will become steady of its own. But until one develops a taste for it, one has to train one's mind forcibly, treating it as a duty. One should thus devote his mind fully to whatever one is doing. While fixing one's mind in the action, one has to watch, where the mind seeks to wander. If one identifies the direction in which the mind is diverted, this identification will provide one with the ability to meditate, that is, it will give one the energy to meditate and make one fit for meditation. Then the mind will observe that ultimate reality flowing inside the body. He will then study the intellect. Then one will turn one's mind from sleep too, and turn it towards the soul. When one does so for hours together, all the energy of the universe, that is imparting life to this body will be manifested. The soul is also like a diamond in the body and in assessing it rightly the fear of all types of death is dispelled, and without any worldly conditions one attains the bliss of the soul.

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DAY 30

If this mind, governed by the force of habit, does not develop the ability and skill to realize the all-pervading God, it will keep on repeating the habit of enjoying trivial pleasures nourished from childhood and will repent when pain follows these trivial pleasures. Five steps have been suggested to be taken in such a state : (1) Confidence or right faith (2) Right efforts or Energy (3) Mindfulness (4) Meditation or spiritual contemplation and (5) Truth bearing knowledge, that is, right knowledge through spiritual contemplation or knowledge of an object as it is.

When something is done again and again, it becomes a forceful habit. In case it is not fulfilled, that is, if something happens which is not in accordance with it, the force of habit gives rise to pain, discomfort, misery, wandering of the mind, lack of interest etc. Then this force pulls one on the same path. One has to render this force of habit so helpless that, owing to lack of force, it does not obstruct the mind from moving in the direction of truth. The final destination for all is God manifested as right knowledge. It prevails alike in every body, and is manifested in the awareness of bliss every moment. It is said in the Bhagavad Gita, that the same conscious living God, manifested as right knowledge, is present in all, but that He is not manifest and that He lies hidden. It is therefore not possible for all human beings to reach that unmanifested God because, they have not attained sufficient self-restraint as yet and hence find it difficult to withdraw themselves and go within. For this, there is another form of meditation, that is called the worship of the manifest God.

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DAY 31

The word 'manifest' means being visible. As is the mind, so will be the manifestation of conduct in everything like one's efforts, seeing, hearing speaking and so on. For example, if someone is eager to fulfil some longing or to express anger, his hands and feet tremble he feels restless. No one does it deliberately. God in him is imperceptible and hidden owing to his state of spiritual ignorance. The person thinks that no one knows his state of mind. But others too have an instrument of wisdom, and they too are concerned about their pains and pleasures. In order to understand the actions of each other, God is as much awake in one as in the other.

This imperceptible God, hidden in every creature, is manifested by a person's face, actions, and various expressions of his eyes and ears. This manifestation has been called awareness, understanding or knowledge in the Bhagavad Gita and the scriptures. This consciousness, through its manifestation, runs the whole world. A man may think in terms of 'I' and 'You', but it is worthless pride. It is the perceptible God that is performing all the actions outside. The way He manifests when creatures come across each other, is the way it runs the machinery of their bodies. He manifests Himself, moment by moment, and then none knows where He goes into hiding. On realising the truth of this God in all manifestations, a man rises above all attachments and aversion, as also the entanglements of 'mine' and 'yours'. When this network of fetters like attachment, aversion etc. along with wrong tendencies of lust and wrath exists no more, the light and pure mind, alike in all situations, will experience in itself the consciousness manifested as right knowledge along with bliss. That is the experience of individual consciousness and supreme consciousness. From individual consciousness to supreme consciousness, to move on the path of right faith one should worship this perceptible God within one's own self.

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AUGUST

Ethical living

When character is lost everything is lost, so goes the saying. The foundation of a noble character is a strong value system. One who desires to meditate earnestly must give the utmost importance to a highly principled way of living. He should try his level best to develop in his character fine ethical values, attitudes and qualities. Compassion for the suffering, praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others, gratitude, contentment, tolerance, forgiveness, loving kindness and friendly attitude towards all are some of the wonderful values highlighted by Swamiji. The human mind is in the fetters of various negative emotions and attitudes. An effective way to eliminate them is to counter the bad with the good, that is, by developing spiritual values and positive attitudes. Unless a person lives ethically, he cannot reap the full benefits of meditation. Ethical living involves discipline and it helps to make life organized and systematic. The energy of meditation is similar to nuclear or atomic energy which can be a boon or a bane depending on how and for what purpose we use it. If a person who meditates regularly also leads a noble and principled life, he will be able to surmount all his mental fetters and attain God realization in course of time.

Editor

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Day 1



AUGUST

One should endeavour to enthrone the perceptible God within oneself in such a way that it may manifest in others similarly. It should not be inimical to anyone, should not do evil or spoil the pleasures of others, or cause miseries to them, or be revengeful; He should not cause harm to anyone in any condition. He should also be able to endure pain. If such a virtue, manifested as right faith settles inside one, then one will attain success. One will be well set on the path by forgoing pleasures and by enduring pain. Enduring pain is called austerity, and forgoing pleasure is called renunciation.

One who keeps only water in view cannot notice the differences of river, pond, ocean, ditch or minor vessels. He will see the same water everywhere. In the same way, one who keeps his eyes fixed on the soul manifested as absolute truth, eternity and bliss, will not see anyone as friend or enemy, lustful or wrathful etc. One will see only the soul manifested as truth, eternity and bliss. This consciousness has to be enthroned in everyone. Keeping that always in view, and freeing oneself from all the fetters, one has to experience the bliss of the soul.

The practice of worship of that manifested God can be done through meditation. But so long as there is no knowledge of meditation, one should tread the path of worship through faith. One must restrain one's anger, avoid indulging too much in desires and greed. Also one must desist from uttering wrong words, stop all theft, ill conduct and violence. All these are the acts of faith that one has to do on the right path. But as one gradually starts understanding, the performance of that perceptible God will become clearly manifest.

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DAY 2

It is the perceptible God that runs everything outside in the external world, and it is the cycle moved by God through His divine dynamism (*maya*). One should develop the habit of speaking courteously and mindfully. Being alert and careful at the right time is known as mindfulness. Then with presence of mind, if one does something as it ought to be done, is called courage. If one is mindful and courageous, it is a higher kind of worship. One should develop the habit of doing everything like brushing teeth, gargling, bathing, washing, eating, speaking etc. with mindfulness. One will, thus start learning where his mind wanders during these simple actions, as also note how it will affect others. One will know the ways to understand all this. To test one's mind, he should study one's own mind, being alert all the while. To understand one's inner self and one's inner truths a thorough study of the inner self or soul is necessary. When one does not know his inner self, how can he explicitly understand the cycle of activities run by the combined group of inner truths ? One has to see all this clearly using one's own knowledge. Thus the way to know and see the performance of God, who runs all beings with His divine dynamism, is to mould one's life in such a way that one does all one's actions of the body, family and society mindfully. When this *Durga*, manifested as mindfulness is steady, one will know one's mind all the time.

The mind is always attached to pleasures, whether the desire is fulfilled or not, or even when the pleasure is trivial and non-permanent. After developing an understanding of the mind's doing, one must adopt one's life in such a way that one is not bound to any object or person for one's pleasure, though fulfilling the needs of one's body for sustenance.

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DAY 3

If the knowledge continues to be awake, one's power to act will also be better. This is the worship done by the seeker to appease God, who resides inside everyone invisible and unmanifest, to manifest Himself outside too. One has to see that God manifest in such a way that it does not create any doubt, fear or hostility in others, then, that God in one will dwell harmoniously in one and also make him happy. The worship of this manifest God is possible only if one gives up all wrong actions. One must bind oneself by rules. Then whatever action one performs in solitude must be done with a great understanding. While performing them one must know whither the God of knowledge dwelling in one is subtly moving. Is the God of knowledge dwelling in fear, doubt, desire or irritation ? If wrong words are to be uttered as a result of this irritation, one should desist from it by observing silence by being calm. Right faith means enduring a little pain; and renunciation means giving up what the mind desires. Austerity means bearing a little with the grief and pain of dispelling the mind's attachment, aversion, ego, doubt and fear, and forgoing pleasures. If one goes on doing so, one will get all inner spiritual knowledge.

Thus, when one transcends one's pleasure and when one avoids irritation and when one eats with equanimity in all situations, know that he has, through his spiritual knowledge, fed God. When one is not in the extremes either of attachment or aversion this knowledge rises, and this awakened knowledge is the manifestation of God. Along with that happiness lies in the power to act.

Feelings of pain and pleasure, residing in the form of the manifest God, make their cyclic movements inside. It is from here that one's efforts, speech and conduct are expressed through that perceptible God. If one rightly understands it and makes efforts to spread happiness in the outside world, the worship of the manifested God begins.

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DAY 4

Through adoption of right faith in God taking refuge in Him, and practising a little forbearence in behaviour with others, one worships the manifest God. The more that God is manifested through the qualities of tolerance and forgiveness, dispassion, contentment etc. the more he will create one's own accord in others.

Very strange are the ways of this God manifested as knowledge. Hidden inside, this God is manifested in various forms. If it is manifestedly so awakened in its pure form in one's that one's mind does not feel discomfort and grief, does not feel bored and is always contented. Those who call this inner God supreme consciousness have realised it in all its subtlety, as one who fulfils all desires, one who is the universal consciousness, and who is omnipotent. This God manifested as knowledge, appearing in one, makes its presence felt in others, and runs its own wave of energy. Whatever pain or pleasure one feels in it is the result of one's actions. Through meditation one can attain such freedom that one will be free from pain from the insatiable passions in the material world, and when this stage is reached, one should know that the divine bliss has manifested itself in one. One who experiences bliss in oneself knows that the whole universe lies in one.

Spiritual meditation, in essence, means being steady in one's self. When an action is performed whole-heartedly, it too becomes meditation. For freeing oneself from the outside world one should first worship the perceptible God before moving on to the worship of imperceptible God. Also one has to worship God on one's own. Simultaneously, one should keep on analysing the wrong tendencies through introspection to purify one's soul and to attain the ultimate everlasting bliss.

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DAY 5

Man feels fearless when he is in a company, but he is frightened when he is alone. This is because he finds his identity in a group. When he is separated from the company of others, he fears the loss of his identity. The acquisition of this trait starts from his childhood, when he receives love and affection while living among many elders, and while learning many different things from them. In that state, a manifest God, an awareness and consciousness arise in him. In the Gita it is called the manifest ego, while some call it his hidden ego, and still other scholars of the scriptures address it as existence. It means that the child has received an identity separate from his previous birth in the company of others. This identity gradually extends to the four walls of the house, locality, town, state and the country and the universe. As it is based on whatever desires he gets fulfilled in this world. He does not want to lose it. When this identity is attached to transient worldly objects and creatures with their illusory nature, their loss immerses him in grief.

There are two kinds of life - the inner spiritual life and the outer materialistic life. The materialistic life is that which is dependent on the five elements (earth, water, fire, air and sky) and living beings. The inner spiritual life which is simultaneously led along with the materialistic life on the other hand is dependent on right knowledge in consciousness, with right understanding of the mind and on the actions of the sense organs, restraining oneself wisely by distancing from the worldly objects and by not being too attached to them. A person's virtues and vices will determine the kind of life he chooses to lead. The world will be formed accordingly for him. Each one is solely responsible for his pleasures and pains.

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DAY 6

This world is created out of appearances, on the way one looks at things. The world as one looks at it, that is, whatever appears in one will create an effect upon others and that is not under one's control. How will one then exert one's influence ? One wonders. The fact is that whatever appears in one will create a similar effect on others and appear accordingly in them. Thus through its manifestation as God, brings joy and sorrows to the living beings, according to one's actions. If one follows right faith and if one does not appear unpleasant to others, one will spread sweetness everywhere. *Swarga* in Sanskrit (heaven) is the fruit of happiness and it is earned by following the right faith.

In order to lead the spiritual life, one will have to understand the divine rules and regulations through which the world operates. When a person comes across another person some sort of spontaneous reaction arises in him owing to divine dynamism and it exerts its influence accordingly as joy, dispute, thrill, excitement, quarrel etc. This influence is the manifestation of divine rules. The God manifested as knowledge is present in everybody's heart, that is, in every person whom one deals with or whom one comes across. Thus, if one speaks or acts as desired by the God dwelling in others, they will give a positive and pleasing response. One has to make some sacrifices to lead the life of right faith, by casting aside the pleasures of bad habits nurtured since childhood. Spiritual life means life within the soul. There will be no darkness of ignorance if the right knowledge is awakened by realising one's self by looking within, analysing the vices and virtues and previous actions in order to decide the future course. It will be the beginning of the dawn of right knowledge.

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DAY 7 (1st Wekened)

Right or Wrong Deeds *(Karma)*

Whatever is done is called a deed or an action but in fact whatever is done deliberately is a deed, that is, action preformed with a purpose, and self-interest in mind. These are of four different kinds: 1. Bright *(shukla)* 2. Dark *(krishna)* 3. Bright-dark *(shukla-krishna)* and 4. Non-bright and dark *(ashukla-krishna)*.

Bright : The deeds which provide happiness in the world are call bright or divine merits *(punya)*. These are also called pure or good actions.

Dark : The deeds that provide suffering are known as dark or sinful deeds, whether done deliberately or habitually without forethought.

Bright-Dark: Deeds that produce both divine merit and sin are known as bright-dark deeds. Some of them are for the benefit of most of the people. They produce more pleasure and cause less pain. Those deeds which are motivated by greater self-interest and less interest of others cause more pain and produce less pleasure. All such deeds are known as bright- dark deeds. Such deeds have an element of sin like violence, falsehood etc., but they have an element of divine merit (*punya*) too as they are also in the interest of others. They have elements of both divine merits and sins.

Non-Bright and Dark : These are the deeds that bring salvation. All deeds that develop ten great powers of friendship , compassion, praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others, affecting ignorance towards bad qualities of others, mental tolerance and intellectual forgiveness, noble and right conduct, spirit of renunciation or charity, right efforts, absorbed meditation and truth bearing knowledge, as well as dispassion, contentment, austerity etc. are non-bright and dark deeds. All deeds which are done without external interest, whether by body or by sense organs, or through austerity enduring pain, for noble actions are non-bright and dark deeds.

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DAY 8

On the spiritual path, a man is comparable to a child who starts learning to walk, who often stumbles feeling discomfort, but who gradually walks and who even runs. The habits of enjoying inner and outer objects start developing from childhood, make one stumble on the path and tempt one to retain his identity as before. But if one controls his actions, doing everything with mindfulness, enduring its pain and hardship, energetically learning something from previous actions, and one goes on doing right things, it will develop into a spiritual life. Then one should meditate in solitude on one's previous actions and start moving in the outer world after learning lessons from it. Such a disciplined life will lead one to meditate for longer periods in solitude, enduring the pain of sitting alone, and keeping awake, and one will attain the joy of meditation and liberation from pain. All this will happen only gradually.

The temptations of the material world will not allow to get unconditional liberation from the outer material world. The path of the material world will ultimately end in misery and one's mind will continue to be restless in solitude. For attaining salvation from the loitering of the mind to the outer world to enjoy its ephemeral pleasures, as well as for keeping it peaceful in solitude one has to awake and activate the right knowledge, prevailing in the soul, veiled by ignorance. Man alone has been endowed with a fully developed intellect, and has the privilege to realise the right knowledge and to reach God, the universal consciousness that lies at the root of the world. If this right knowledge arises within, one should know that one's life is successful. One who succeeds in doing so, retains one's wisdom and escapes the vicissitudes of nature. One who treads on the path, following one's wisdom is a true devotee of God.

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DAY 9

A life devoted to right faith, to spirituality and to God is a life of meditation. The result is the enjoyment of everlasting bliss. When man finds that indescribable happiness in his soul, he will not go outside to seek any material pleasure. Further, deep mediation will reveal to him the illusory nature of material pleasures, and also the insignificance of his ego or identity. In the spiritual life, he will not get the joy of his earlier identity. He will have to learn to put up with a certain amount of disrespect or lack of recognition of his former status in the material world. If he succeeds in facing all this with courage, it will be to his benefit. Moreover, he should control sleep, and sit for meditation and slowly but firmly withdraw his mind inside.

There are three kinds of life physical, spiritual and universal. Right form his childhood, a man associates his identity with his physical life in the outer material world, and constantly fears its loss. That is why he feels out of place when he is alone, and discovers his identity in the objects and creatures of the external world. This habit continues throughout his life. So he must conduct himself with wisdom and embrace the spiritual or religious life for his own upliftment. When his inner self has been purified all divine qualities like tolerance and compassion manifest in him and they enable him to sit in deep meditation for hours. He begins to enjoy everlasting divine peace and bliss hidden behind the veil of ignorance. He attains universal consciousness which leads him to the ultimate realisation that God, manifested as bliss, is omnipresent. His limited physical identity merges with the universal consciousness, and he is liberated.

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DAY 10

A man is mistaken if he believes that in his old age he can live happily with the help of external resources like wealth, members of his family, friends and dear ones alone. Man's best friend and guide in the sunset years is right faith or the adoption of good habits and qualities acquired at an early age. On growing old, the strength of his body and sense organs declines and he does not have anything attractive left in him, and his company may not be desired by others. He finds himself weak and neglected. He falls a victim to diseases and mental grief. Nothing appeals to him and he wishes to die.

However, if one has nurtured and if one has adopted the right faith of feeling at home in solitude, whether through the contemplation on God, or by trying to realize one's true soul by concentrating on one's life, one's boat of life may sail through smoothly. Such a man in solitude realises that he should remain in the community only as long as is required and he is useful to the communty and vice-versa. When both do not need each other, he should be happy and contented in solitude. Such a person contemplates what is worth contemplating, and realises the truth of the world that is worth realising. That is called meditation, and through it he acquires wisdom, courage, control over anger and desires, and frees himself from 'ego'. This right faith, though of great value, cannot be adopted all at once in old age, and he needs to nurture and practise it from his youth. The moment a man realises the truth, right faith becomes a part of his life.

The *Yagnopavita,* wearing the sacred thread ceremony is observed between the age of five and sixteen in order to develop this realisation itself. *Yajna* means (i) accumulation of good qualities, and (ii) association with good persons, and giving up one's ego.

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DAY 11

Yagnopavita ceremony means embracing *yajna*. It is not merely a sacred thread *(yagnopavita)*, rather, it is a symbol to suggest that the child has now embraced the *yajna* and that he is now bound to observe all its rules. He would have to cultivate good qualities, associate with noble persons and give up his ego, and bear with all discomfort for this purpose. If, in this way the good qualities are adopted from childhood to youth, it means that one has gained entry into the realm of God.

Whatever action is done with the full realisation of truth is quite energetic and strong. Nature pushes man and all creatures into action developing in them worldly knowledge and making them experience it. The function of nature is to produce in the face of some opposing object or situation, doubt and fear, which are its instruments. In this state one loses the power to distinguish between right and wrong, and is very likely to act according to the passion and knowledge of his nature. At this juncture, if he can avoid or postpone taking wrong action for a few moments, and contemplate on the future action, he has developed mindfulness to analyse the situation and its after effects. Through austerity, courage and tolerance of suffering, he may turn away the advances of nature to undertake wrong actions.

When a man imbibes the five factors for the development of salvation as referred to earlier; right religious confidence, right energy, mindfulness, absorbed meditation with serenity, and truth bearing knowledge he should know that spiritual knowledge has entered his mind. However, these powers come only to a person who knows his self.

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DAY 12

Repetition of an action becomes a habit, powerful enough to push a man on the wrong path, pleasant to his senses. One must not be swayed by the impulses of nature. For that one must awaken the power of wisdom, and then only God manifested as right knowledge will come to him. However, right knowledge and wisdom (deciding action after due reflection) do not dwell where aversion and anger reside. A man must, therefore, restrain his life a bit through spiritual contemplation to counter the waves of nature. For true meditation to develop further one has to achieve liberation from the external material world. Only then he attains true happiness in absorbed meditation.

Whenever there is an impulse to do or to get something, one must awaken one's thought and mindfulness to judge whether the action is in accordance with one's ultimate interest. If necessary, one must force one's mind to take the right course. Then one will never be dependent, and will lead one's life with the freedom of the soul. Salvation means liberation from the outer material fetters and from the slavery of others.

If one learns to bow in life in youth, one will be able to bow in later life. By obeying the elders and by catering to their needs, man enhances four things, namely, longevity, practical wisdom, reputation and power for liberation. Also one who serves and who respects elders well, develops a fine character, so one can live comfortably in one's old age among one's children. By living a disciplined life right from youth one will be free from dependence on nature. Man should also learn to subdue his ego and sense of self-importance. This will help him to cultivate detachment, which is essential for effective meditation. Thus, he will dwell forever in the house of salvation where all sufferings and fears come to an end.

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DAY 13

The first pre-requisite needed for man to move on the path of right faith is to have confidence in it, because the mind does not, on its own think at all of moving on that path. The mind is adamant and clings to its habit of deriving pleasures from the outer world, as it has been used to clinging to this habit since man's childhood. However, gradually, as age advances, these habits and beliefs do not provide the same pleasure to a person. He then realises the necessity of some greater joy to satisfy him. If a person has not yet discovered the path of right faith, he will not know how to spend life in solitude along the path of right faith.

Man cannot live with an unoccupied mind. In old- age too, out of self-interest, he moves in the same way, being trapped in family ties. But the members of his family do not need him as before. In such a situation, he gets a lot of free time because whatever he can do in his old age probably does not serve the purpose of others. In such a state, if he does not get the support of right faith, he will spend his time in worthless and useless things like entertaining himself in wrong company, wrong conversation and wrong thinking. Ultimately, he will not die in peace, and being non-desirous of liberation will remain entangled in the world and will be reborn.

Those who have confidence in right faith strive to awaken their minds to right knowledge and consciousness. They try to reject all evil qualities in them, turning away from the world to move within themselves. While contemplating on the divine qualities of God, they try to imbibe them. They endure some pain in adopting the rules and regulations of the divine path of right faith gradually realise the futility of worldly support they relied on earlier.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Destiny/Luck *(Bhagya)*

All kinds of deeds remain established in the self of an individual in three different forms. These three forms are respectively known as accumulated *(sanchita)*, future (*agami*) and destined *(prarabdha)*. Actions that have caused this body and that are ready to bear their consequences as pleasure or pain are called destined deeds. The actions which are being done at present but would bear fruit later are known as future deeds. The rest of these which are earned and which have been established in the mind and which have not been availed of, nor are likely to be availed of in future are known as earned deeds. These earned and established deeds never go waste. They are burnt only by the fire of right knowledge, which signals the manifestation of one's realization of the self. This realization of the self takes place only when all the fetters of spiritual ignorance like wrong view, attachment, aversion, love of forms, love of the formless, delusion and pride, completely perish and when one's all deeds are burnt to ashes. Undergoing the experience of pleasure and pain ends one's destined actions and the rest of the deeds expire in the fire of knowledge.

For a human being it is proper to lead his life in accordance with right faith making right efforts for salvation. Whatever may be received by luck, a person must keep his right knowledge and be mindful. He must not let anything contrary happen. He must not feel trapped in assuming whether the luck has weakened or not and then salvation will surely be attained by his sustained efforts.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) continued ...
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(76)

A petty slip in conduct may guide well one to show,
The whole series of ties, inner, with one to know;
For right release from them as right faith, mindfulness,
Energy, meditation with insight, bring success.

(77)

Contacted things are viewed to accept or reject,
By known pleasure or pain love or hatred project;
Doubt, deliberation for conduct and all avowed,
In sphere of interest block road to peace-abode.

(78)

For pleasant sensation thinking affection bind,
To avoid the painful ones same does hatred unkind;
Lost in concerned thinking dwell on self-interest,
Goes deep in worries mind deluded, finds no rest.

(79)

Spring up then various views and tearing doubts prevail,
One on conduct and vows much dwells to no avail;
With love of sense's sphere and all conceive the mind,
Bind too conscious dual self, lastly ignorance blind.

(80)

Free from desire, and end ties satisfied,
One feels in hearing, seeing, mere observing delight;
But by outward inward conditions, if be tied,
Even possessed of all in mind lives ever tight.

(81)

As things go against one, sure, one lives with concern,
But, overlook at last as truth of them discern;
Seeing certain factor's play goes glad in them serene,
Prevail, then, love of life with zeal for well-being keen.

(82)

Require enlightenment go safe its organs four,
Meditation, mindfulness, heroic efforts to score;
Study of facts to decide truth of life which relates,
With one's release from pains resulting in free states.

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DAY-15

The average mind accustomed to the pleasures of habit blocks one's way to right spiritual path through austerity. Such a person who has not attained the strength to overcome the bad habits, has first of all to develop the necessary strength in his soul, and then also to gather the divine power of liberation from the world. In this pursuit many saints and teachers have advised the seekers to seek the support of some holy recitation in such a life of habits. But this recitation will be of limited help. Unless the right knowledge is awakened in the mind, there will be no realization of the soul inside, manifested as bliss. For want of bliss, the mind feeling restless will revert back to material objects and creatures. Also, even if one goes on reciting the *'Mantra'* or *'Naam'* (divine name) received from a spiritual teacher without reflecting on its meaning, it will have limited effect, and it will not bring any inner knowledge.

In order to realise one's soul, one should start contemplation with the help of the *mantra* given by the spiritual teacher. In the scriptures mindfulness or contemplation is called meditation. According to the scriptures, there are five aspects of meditation : (i) Right reason, (ii) Spiritual contemplation, (iii) Spiritual love, (iv) Bliss, and (v) Showing indifference towards others' faults. In this manner, one starts with the recitation of the divine name or *mantra* and if along with this if one's mind awakens to the thought of the divine being or God, then one moves to the second phase of spiritual contemplation, i.e. the contemplation of the meaning of the divine word or mantra. Gradually, the right knowledge will be awakened inside one and one will be absorbed in it. The right knowledge and sitting in solitude will establish spiritual qualities in him, liberating one from worldly fetters, and he will enjoy bliss oblivious of others' faults and sins.

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DAY 16

In order to reach one's soul, one has, at first to be mindful of the divine name or *mantra*. A mere passive recitation is not of much use. Mindfulness means that a person should start realizing that Being whose name he is reciting. When the mind starts contemplation with right knowledge, sloth, sleep and indolence will be dispelled. The mind does not awaken without mindfulness.

To divert the slothful mind absorbed in feeling pleasure in worldly thoughts to its awakened state one should sit on a seat with the back erect, without using any back support. Then he should contemplate on any divine name that one believes in, and depend upon whatever one sees inside. He should contemplate on God's virtues: contentment, dispassion, forgiveness, patience, friendship (feeling happy in the happiness of others), compassion (for the sufferings of others), praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others and showing indifference towards their bad qualities, etc. Trying to ruminate about these qualities in the mind and practising them, will help his mind to become absorbed in right knowledge. One should remember God by uttering divine names Rama Rama ! or Shiva, Shiva ! or Om, Om! such contemplation will be of great benefit. As one tries to understand Him one will be able to imbibe the divine virtues in oneself, all one's wrong tendencies will get removed and one's mind will be purified. The pure mind will attain the same bliss as belongs to God. In this way one should raise the awareness of one's mind. These are the two aspects of meditation—right knowledge and contemplation, that is, uttering the divine word, and awakening contemplation through the divine name.

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DAY 17

Vitark means utterance of the divine word, but one must make sure that this utterance should not become mechanical or without right knowledge. 'Mechanical' implies that the mind is entangled in the world owing to sloth and laziness, but that one goes on reciting the divine name, which is of no merit. Through the recitation of divine name with an awakened mind and reflecting on God's virtues will develop divine love in him in course of time. Now onwards, his meditation will be combined with divine love and will be called meditation with right knowledge, contemplation .

Divine love means devotion. In the *Bhakti Sutras* (Formulae of Divine Love) it is written *"sa tu asmin param prem rupa"*, meaning that, the mind should be so engaged in the contemplation of God that one should be completely oblivious of the world. This indeed is divine love. There are many manifestations of divine love. One may participate in group recitation and utter the divine name. Likewise there are many minor varieties of divine love. The central idea is to be mindful of the divine virtues of God, of whose name one contemplates, to attain divine love. One thus absorbed in contemplation of the virtues of God, loses awareness of the passage of time, and remains oblivious of the outer voices.

During the course of divine love, through right understanding, one can visualize God can realize His virtues, and can attains bliss. This type of meditation is known as blissful meditation, and this gives rise to a new identity. One attains right knowledge and one's wisdom will be aroused. In this stage one becomes indifferent not only to the bad qualities of others but about to the bliss and remains absorbed in attaining the final goal of meditation i.e. complete knowledge of spiritual truth.

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DAY 18

The path to one's own welfare, ultimately, is that the mind should be absorbed in itself without any support from others. In such a state, if one sits in meditation, contemplates and is mindful, if one unites with one's soul and if one finds happiness there, one will be in bliss. One lives in the outer material world for one's physical needs. During the periods when there are no physical needs, one is absorbed in the bliss of the soul. A person living in such bliss finds everybody as his own. A person thus can live within himself alone in happiness if he emerges out of the fetters of habits, if he develops all virtues in him and if he needs nothing besides it i.e. no object or creature of the outer material world for his physical needs.

The bliss of solitude shows that death makes one leave only the outer material world. There is nothing to fear about what exists beyond death. This soul or consciousness, manifested as right knowledge can never die. Meditation proves that the path to one's ultimate welfare lies in persuading the distracted mind to become absorbed in the bliss of solitude, and that the mind should thus free itself once and for all, of all external supports.

To sum up, one must spend less time in worthless pursuits and sit in solitude for meditation, enduring the pain and discomfort involved. One should keep one's mind simple and avoid anger. Turning away from negativities, one should start chanting some *mantra*, with full comprehension of its meaning. While chanting the *mantra* one should contemplate on the divine virtues of God. This will enable one's mind to move away from the outer material world and withdraw into its inner self. Depending on one's earnestness, one's intensity of meditation will deepen and culminate in everlasting bliss. When this bliss is experienced, the fear of death ends. This is true liberation or salvation.

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DAY 19

There is a tendency in man to desire to be so free in the world that none can obstruct his actions and that his wishes should be fulfilled, i.e. total freedom like a bird. Slavery or encagement is disliked by all. However, in this world no one can live wilfully, without observing certain rules of conduct. To remain comfortable in life and specially in old age when one has to depend on others, one has to discipline oneself right through boyhood learning and enhancing one's power of tolerance.

However, there comes a stage when a man sees that he is not dependent on any outer material objects or on creatures, and that he is absolutely free. The stage is that of the self or the soul, If one is liberated from the world and if one's worldly impressions are not awakened, there will be no obstacle. There is no other creature present there. Only the right knowledge, manifested as soul, appears ever new in himself. This is called non-duality in the scriptures. This very soul, equally present everywhere, is experienced universally. Non-duality means that there is none else. Non-duality implies the absence of fear. This happiness of freedom or salvation will be felt only in one's soul. One has to enhance this freedom to such an extent that one can realize his soul in solitude and see the same soul in everybody. This is known as being one with the universe. *Brahman* means the expansion of the self. Man, at first, should realize this soul within him. Then he should expand it so much that he may observe the same soul in everybody. Such a man will experience absolute freedom, even while living in this world. Once the soul is realized, there is no cause to feel any opposition or hostility from others, and he can live in great happiness.

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DAY 20

When a man is a slave to pleasures, he cannot have happiness in solitude. So first of all one must liberate oneself from the slavery to the pleasures of the outer material world. Then, if his soul bears with the discomfort of sitting in solitude, and if it causes no harm in the outside world, it will feel inner happiness, and the man will be at peace with himself. However, one has to learn a lot to reach to this state through mediation.

Learning is of many types and through many teachers, right from infancy. Here the reference is to spiritual education imparted by the Guru mentioned in the holy scriptures, to his disciple. The disciple necessarily means a person who is fit to learn. That is, if he brings the truth in himself in a proper manner, and learns something himself through right knowledge. Such a person is ultimately fit for learning. Such learning does not require the closing of the eyes. There are many things to learn while living in the world.

It is not essential that the same teacher should teach everything. In the scriptures we find the example of the venerable Dattatreya who had twenty four teachers. This shows that his mind was keen to learn. His preceptors include the earth, fire, water, sky, a girl etc. and he learnt different things from each. The ancient sages also prescribed fasting and observing vows as useful requisites in spiritual education. Fasting on specific days, taking a vow not to take salt and other practices like offering of water to Lord Shiva etc., are all aimed to put a curb on one's insatiable passions, overcome one's dependence on material things and increases one's powers of tolerance and of enduring pain accruing from these self-imposed restrictions. One gradually learns to observe the drama of nature without getting agitated or provoked. These principles and their observance have their effect on the development of the virtues in a person. Whatever trivial or great desire one may have, if one has attained the peace of one's soul while forgoing it, overcoming it and enduring the pain of doing so, know that one has examined one's soul and manifested it as bliss.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

End to be achieved by human efforts *(Purushartha)*

Purushartha or end to be achieved by human efforts means the effort that a person makes to secure his interest and to avoid what is contrary to it. This consequently is the right effort which means doing all noble deeds and avoiding wrong actions. It implies renunciation of all ignoble deeds and bad qualities and gathering all good qualities. Desire, anger, greed envy, ego, impatience etc. are all bad qualities. Similarly, dispassion, mental tolerance, intellectual forgiveness, contentment, friendship, patience etc. are good qualities. They cannot be developed without energetic efforts. One must make constant efforts to attain them so that they are sustained forever. All this is known as the end to be achieved by human efforts. For this one needs necessarily to turn away from wrong tendencies, through right efforts.

The four ends to be achieved by human efforts include, right faith *(dharma)*, wealth *(artha)*, worldly pleasures *(kama)* and salvation *(moksha)* mentioned in the religious scriptures. A person's conduct in accordance with right faith *(dharma)* is aimed at his future happiness. Similarly, to earn money for worldly pleasures is an end to achieve by human efforts. Sexual pleasure that provides a power to run the world of nature is also included as an end to be achieved by human efforts. A common person must not renounce the sexual pleasure, as the divine power may destroy the human balance if he renounces sexual ability forcibly without attaining complete right knowledge, and then he may not be able to make right use of his life. For that reason, the wise sages have included it as an end to be achieved because it is an impulse of nature. Finally, the ultimate goal of a human being is to attain eternal bliss—salvation.

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DAY 22

God alone is said to be omnipresent. However, His omnipresence is meaningful to human beings if they can see the living God as present in all. That is to say, one should realize that the same God, with His divine dynamism, is the moving force in all. A living being in his narrow mindedness has self-interest and sees others differently. Self interest is of two types. In the first type a man wishes to avoid whatever appears to be unpleasant or painful to him. The second type of self-interest makes him wish to secure whatever appears to be very pleasant to him. There is a struggle, too, to secure a pleasant object for its pleasure, and to avoid whatever appears to be unpleasant. During this struggle, if one adopts some principle or way to restrain oneself, there will be no clash with others. Thus, they are no opponents or enemies. At first, this should be realized by one in one's soul. There is a unique soul dwelling in one's self, and it is a manifestation of everlasting and true bliss. There are no tendencies of friendliness and hostility in it. But the soul residing in oneself will oppose and resist if it is dependent on outer material objects.

One must be constantly aware of the conflict that goes on in his mind owing to self-interest, i.e. the craving or longing to fulfil desires and insatiable worldly passions. Desires are there only to secure the pleasure of worldly objects and creatures, or for gaining respect, or to interact with others. Whatever happens in this path of desire is never in one's interest. When a person tries to develop the habit of earning his livelihood in the right way and when he forgoes his wrong desires he will be said to be moving on the path of right faith. Therefore, one must so discipline oneself that there is no clash within or outside one's self. All the clash and the sense of possession are due to self-interest, which when bypassed allows the seeker to see the same soul everywhere, which he has realized within himself.

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DAY 23

The best learning will be to watch and endure one's pain. It means to practise turning away from worldly objects by merely watching and enduring the pain caused by doing so, and not by appeasing them with worldly objects. When the desire to have worldly pleasures is overcome in the mind, the suffering caused by it will no longer be there. Only one has to bear it patiently. By bearing with it as one bears with an itch, the suffering will be dispelled on its own, in course of time. When this happens, the spontaneous spiritual bliss will be manifested. Thus one should keep his mind at peace through contemplation. If one's right wisdom is maintained and the mind remains at peace while watching the suffering, one has acquired learning. Whatever sacrifice has to be made for such learning is called renunciation. Whatever one has to do for it is known as practice of austerity. As long as it is not complete, one cannot attain salvation, which abolishes all opposition and enmity, and which makes one's bliss everlasting. Goswami Tulsidas is quite right when he admonishes man saying: "paradhin sapnehun sukh nahin, kar vichar dekho man mahin", that means : O man! contemplate well in the mind and observe that one who is dependent can have no happiness, (whether it is dependence on any object or living being). One who is dependent on other persons and objects of this material world can never have spiritual bliss.

A man needs to be aware of the fact that the pleasures of insatiable worldly passions are dependent on others, and they cannot provide true happiness. One must attain liberation from this dependence. One has to learn in order to attain this liberation. All the scriptures state that if one wants liberation, one has to learn or become a disciple. One may adopt some teacher. However, mere listening to his teachings does not provide liberation to anyone unless one imbibes them in oneself and acts accordingly, in life. This learning means that one must forgo every other object except that which is required by the body and that one must develop the habit of enduring the pain caused in their absence.

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DAY 24

As long as the mind is entangled outside, it wanders in the world of insatiable worldly passions. In such a state it belongs to the outside world. If these passions continue till the time of a person's death, he will be reborn in this world. This is because he is still running towards the outside world to overcome his suffering. After his death, too, he will run towards the outside world to get rid of his sufferings. This running towards the outside world to get rid of sufferings is called dependence or bondage. If one overcomes this dependence while being alive, one should know that one is liberated. There is no other way of liberation.

To get rid of this dependence one has to train one's mind in a gradual and steady way. To start with, one should give up taking salt on some fixed day like Tuesday, and observe the suffering caused by this insatiable desire to take salt. Here too one must not look for the taste of sweet objects, but just watch the suffering of not taking salt, to realise the extent of suffering caused by this desire, to fully realise the discomfort and measure its force. All this is inner knowledge and will teach a lot to the mind within. On this day, one should also abstain from taking even sweet objects of one's choice. The mind will be unhappy by forgoing salt, and will not like even to talk to anyone. Similarly, some day, one must take tea and milk without sugar. On doing so one should observe the suffering caused by this desire and the state of one's mind. These are all vows and can bring a lot of inner knowledge and transformation. One gets acquainted with the different states of the mind. On some day, such as *Ekadashi* (eleventh day of the moon), one should forgo food grains and live on fruits. Similarly, one should fix some time for observing silence *(mauna)*. All these vows will enable one to understand the degree of entanglement in the outside world and will liberate one from them if one successfully endures the suffering in detaching oneself from them, by even not thinking of these passions of taste, speech etc.

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DAY 25

This simple fasting observance teaches that the bondage of material objects is false. Though some suffering is caused by the one's withdrawal of worldly desires or temptations, and it lingers for quite some time though, when it comes to an end after enduration, it brings a lot of joy of liberation from them. This joy will be never ending. When do birds and animals eat salt or sugar ? Just as venerable Dattatreya learnt from many, to show that man can also learn from birds and animals. One should be vigilant to learn virtues from all sources. If the learning mind acquires this habit and does not go to sleep in its loneliness, one should know that the mind has united with the soul and that it has attained the bliss of the soul. The spiritual bliss was only hidden behind the insatiable worldly passion, and the soul was unhappy because of the provocation from these desires. That desire will disappear when one endures the suffering caused by it, and eternal spiritual bliss will be manifested.

Just as one has gone through the suffering of giving up the desire for salt, sugar, excess food, similarly one should observe the suffering in giving up other cravings. For instance, excess sleep i.e. the desire to lie down and enjoy sloth and indolence. That is not to say that one needs to give up sleep completely. One should enjoy one session of sound sleep for a fixed period only. Then one must sit erect in the seat of meditation. One must endure whatever discomfort is caused by it. But whatever wrong tendencies, doubts and fear arise owing to lack of sleep, one must dispel them through contemplation or right knowledge. Meditation means to endure the discomfort of an object not liked by one and adjust accordingly. One has to so discipline the mind that it can live happily in all circumstances.

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DAY 26

Worldly passions are never satisfied, so one has to endure the discomfort caused by them as these very passions cause suffering. If a person learns to overcome suffering while observing it without giving in to sleep or sloth, know that this is ultimately the best education. This is the enactment of that consciousness which is hidden inside. One cannot even imagine the miracles of this consciousness if one's mind is absorbed in the outside world and if one is tempted by worldly pleasures. The actions of the person who has learnt to intelligently overcome sufferings are so unique that one wonders how easily the suffering which provoked has been overcome.

On the spiritual path, one's prime duty is toward oneself. One has to overcome one's sufferings by oneself. One should realize that the root cause of one's suffering is the tendency of the mind to stray in the outer material world. One must eliminate this weakness through observation, understanding and renunciation. One ought to live in the outside world only for as much time as is essential and retreat into solitude whenever possible. As long as the mind is scattered, it will get entangled in the worthless worldly pursuits, temptations, clashes and conflicts of the world of duality.

The only way to attain liberation from all this and to enjoy everlasting peace is to turn away from them consciously. One should understand that true happiness lies only within one's soul. Where there is non-duality, there is no doubt or fear. Peace and joy and bliss reside in one's inner self. In order to reach there one has to emancipate oneself from the slavery of insatiable passions by restraining the mind through spiritual education. If one cultivates forgiveness, forbearance, and becomes steady in suffering and renunciation, then all clashes and conflicts will be resolved. When the soul is realized, man attains true happiness. He will then see the same bliss reflected in everyone. This is cosmic consciousness. Man will then experience the bliss of being one with the entire universe. This is true liberation, salvation or the total freedom of the soul.

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DAY 27

No living organism, be it a worm or an animal or a man, ever wants to die. All this is due to the limitation of knowledge. Knowledge is always retained, and it is not lost. The soul manifested as knowledge is so deep within that the creature fears it may cease to exist. Each one tries to retain his knowledge. According to our scriptures, a man is born in a certain form depending upon his deeds of previous lives. The sages who have realised this truth are able to understand man's inner feelings.

Committing wrong deeds means to cause misery to others for the sake of his own happiness. The sinful man, who commits such actions cannot lead a mentally relaxed life in this world as his sinful deeds have put a veil over his wisdom, which would otherwise help him to take the right decision to lead a peaceful life. The veil has hidden from him the knowledge of the supreme consciousness *(Paramatma)* that extends through all time and space. This veil is called spiritual ignorance *(avidya)*. It does not allow one to realize the true blissful form of God. All evil actions are done secretly, out of fear from others.

There are two possible consequences for a person who thus performs wicked actions stealthily : (i) If his wickedness is exposed, and if he is caught by someone in the outer world while committing the sin, then he will be punished during his life time. (ii) If his wickedness is not exposed, fear will settle itself indelibly in his mind like a line inscribed on a stone, as an indelible mark.

Of all the living beings, only man has the ability to understand his own life. He should in great depth and seriousness try to explore and understand the entity which is in him and which on getting up from sleep, tells him such and such things used to happen to it. This study is for the soul, the *antaratma*, the inner being in man.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Impressions (Sanskara)

Sanskara is the name for those impressions that are deeply imprinted on the inner self or on the mind. When some person sees an object or experiences it or when he does some action, that action may soon be over but its impression is etched deeply in a subtle form on the mind. This indeed is impression. One also acquires some knowledge through sense organs through hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, touching, when his sense organs come in contact with their respective objects. Though such knowledge is not everlasting and though it is soon erased, its impression in a subtle form remains established in the inner self or in the mind. These are all different forms of impressions. These are not erased even after numerous births. Many *yogis recall* their previous lives through the vision of these impressions. Impression is that which produces old memories. It is these very impressions that through the objects in the mind develop the wrong tendencies of desire, anger etc. When the mind is vacant even for a short while, i.e. when nothing is visible to know about, when the spiritual ignorance appears and when there is no presence of mind, these impressions arise on their own, awaken the memory of old objects, and old practices and entangle him in former deeds and thus keep him entangled. All this is the trap of this world.

In essence, it is only the impressions awakened by the spiritual ignorance that leads a person towards the world. If that spiritual ignorance is rooted out, and the right knowledge of consciosusness is constantly experienced, there will be no time for the impressions to arise. Then the soul would always be devoid of pain.

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DAY 28 (*4th Long Weekend*) *continued* .. *Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life*

(83)

Don't slack, go enlightened, live in yourself conscious,
May not give sinful-being some existence impious;
Viewing things and persons drives with love, hatred and pride,
By doubts, lust, anger-like all emotions outside.

(84)

In crowd of interest we live in a world of clash,
To spoil where serenity inner forces to dash;
Missing pleasure and love stretch one wrong to reflect,
Cast searching look things, dawns truth to right effect.

(85)

Disappear all, as truth shines inward outward complaints,
One knows as is the world, in it one's being with taints;
Go in struggle intense inwards but with reason,
Meditation, heedfulness and research at season.

(86)

Not want outwards, all meet; not cease, but, mind to press,
Failure and agitation not let one's peace express;
Reflect then one on truth in life and live not loose,
Mindful, energetic, meditative cut one's noose.

(87)

Not live one with virtues and with powers defined,
Fall in fits of anger with lust and greed confined;
Devoid of self-control need all worldly product,
Such a life is said as loose with emotional conduct.

(88)

On constant upward walk one feels pain and decline,
In zeal, in vigour too, viewing ease and all the fine;
But seeing no death, no harm, energetic one rise,
So with faith keep efforts, such a strenuous life is prize.

(89)

Oneself gone out of ties see limitations of all,
Outwardly dependent how into all ills fall;
Then, more kind, more in strength in life being strenuous more,
See nothing left remained for himself to deplore.

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DAY 29

It is stressed again and again that man has been endowed with the ability to understand himself and his life. However, he has to make the necessary disciplined efforts to attain self knowledge. He must be constantly aware that *sahastraksha,* the thousand-eyed God, is ever watching his sinful deeds. This God resides in his inner being as his *antaratma* or the witness soul. Man has first to obtain this vedic knowledge through *satsang* or from spiritual teachers; next he must reflect on it; finally, he must meditate deeply on it. These indeed are the three ways of realizing the soul.

First of all one must listen for a while, because unless one listens, thoughts cannot arise within him. Just as thoughts are aroused in one's mind by listening to other's words, one should also arouse thoughts by constantly uttering words within oneself. One may seek explanations and discuss his problems to find relevant solutions through conversations with learned ones. This is called *satsang.* Or, one may study the available and the procurable scriptures to that effect. But both of these are of limited use, as mere listening or reading does not eliminate trouble unless one reflects and unless one meditates over such words in his mind, to initiate action.

Insatiable passions and ignorance are the offspring of mere listening. Nothing can be understood through mere listening. Therefore, one should contemplate deeply. If one wanders, loaded with merely heard or read teachings, a sense of false pride will be developed in oneself. All these words are empty and are of no use unless what one has heard does not sink into one's soul. What one has heard will sink into his soul only through contemplation. The meaning of reflection is to churn one's soul sitting alone to reflect upon what one has heard or read and to adopt it in one's life and to discover its relationship with life.

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DAY 30

The *Bhagavad Gita* describes that lust, wrath and greed are at the root of all the disasters in life and that they form the three doors to the destruction of the soul. On the path of self-realisation, one should first renonuce all of them and become free. The words lust, wrath and greed are so prevalent in the world that man thinks he understands them easily. But it is not enough to understand these words by merely listening to them. To understand them he should reflect on them in solitude. Through reflection when the truth sinks into his soul, know that right thought has entered in him. This right thought will touch his soul from very near and he will truly realise the soul. This true happiness (bliss) is hidden in this very soul, after attaining which a man feels that he has attained whatever had to be attained.

All the worldly relations with the objects and persons and the pleasurers derived from them are temporary, and they put a veil over the blissful nature of the soul and assume a pleasant form. These ephemeral pleasures of the outer world always lack something and are soon followed by pain. Man tries to find some relaxation in sleep. However tired or anxious a man might be before he goes to sleep, when he wakes up after a sound sleep, he does feel a little fresh. The source of that freshness is in his soul which dwells in him. He reaches his inner soul where he kicks off the external world, or when the external world gets off his mind. Sound sleep comes only when the mind does not wander outside. In this condition whenever he is in his soul, he finds the source of that freshness, which is true happiness. Through sleep man enjoys the happiness of being close to his soul.

The man who can get the inner happiness while awake has attained bliss. This bliss, however, cannot be attained by kicking off every object while asleep.

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DAY 31

The man who attains inner happiness while awake experiences bliss along with the manifestation of knowledge. Man does not feel the lack of anything. When one enters one's inner self, no external worry remains. But all this will be possible only if the inner spiritual eye opens and only if the right intellect is awkened. It is called the third eye of Lord *Shiva*. The name Shiva denotes welfare. It is not possible to open the third eye through self-effort. For that one has to listen to some right words and then to reflect on what one has heard. One will then experience the inner truths. One will be able to understand all one's wrong tendencies, and the fetters of affection and aversion, and how they burn the fire of sorrow within. Then the true desire to be liberated from these fetters will arise, and that will lead to right efforts and to some pain or austerity required to renounce wrong external pleasures opposed to the path of truth. As long as the inner eye does not open, the truth will not be realised. True happiness, thus, is hidden deep in one's soul. If man can reach there and attain this everlasting bliss, the sorrows of the world cannot shake him anymore.

On the path the seeker may observe *'nididhyasan'*, which means to meditate with great perseverance or devotion. One must prepare oneself to endure pain or sorrows patiently for attaining good qualities and lessons, and make it one's duty *(dharma)*. All our sorrows are meant to rouse oneself a little from pain, fear, desire, sacrifice, dignity, indignity or the need to awaken oneself from sleep. If one can develop the habit of learning by awakening oneself through enduring pain, and if one can develop courage in one's mind by sitting in solitude, one is on the right path to salvation. By dispelling ignorance one will experience bliss in himself.

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SEPTEMBER

Significance of Solitude

A person who is keen to meditate should practise the art of remaining in solitude without any fear or discomfort. The human mind, by nature, has a tendency to stray into the external world. That is why right from birth man loves to be in company. But constant company will make the mind all the more noisy and ever restless. That is why we should try to compulsorily move away from company and spend some time all by ourselves in perfect solitude every day. To begin with, we can choose a solitary place where are sure not to be disturbed at least for a short while. We should sit comfortably in any meditative posture. Having fixed our *asana*, we should spend some time simply watching our breath, without break. Even though this exercise sounds easy, it really is not so. It takes a lot of concentration to merely sit and watch one's breath. Stray thoughts, emotions, both negative and positive will come as distractions. We must gently but firmly brush them away and continue to watch our breath. If we practise like this for a few weeks or months we will be able to master the habit of sitting alone at least for a while. Gradually we can increase the duration of sitting alone. In course of time, we will begin to actually enjoy our solitude!

Editor

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Day 1



SEPTEMBER

The greatest sorrow is that on being born in this world, as soon as his eyes open, a person is separated from his soul. Thus a hollow space is created in him. The empty space needs to be filled. It will be filled when the mind, which has strayed in the world, gets consolidated there. If it gets filled up, it brings happiness. If it is not filled up, sorrow makes him cry out : "Where and how can happiness be found ?" That is what it lacks. Right from childhood, the mind has always been scattering out, like a child who has always received life from outside. Even joy appears to be only outside. The fact of the matter is that the mind gets consolidated only if it forgets the external world and if the soul will fill the inner empty space. There is happiness and peace in the filled soul. He then attains the kingdom of the soul, known as *swarajya siddhi*. This internal kingdom, is attained only when man attains liberation from the slavery to nature *(prakriti)*, that is the fetters of materialistic life.

In order to achieve his goal, one has to study and listen to the scriptures, remember divine names, and know by which names one has to meditate within. At first, one may meditate on lust, anger, greed, desire, likes and dislikes etc., to watch their drama and learn from the various tortures they create and the ways to dispel them through creation of opposite qualities. If one is able to pursue this entire network of thought and to arouse such contemplation inside then know that the mind is alone. Now, through continuous contemplation the mind, which is scattered outside, comes alone to its soul, and gets consolidated there. The power of the consolidated and concentrated mind produces the right knowledge.

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DAY 2

Just as an object is seen in a concentrated beam of light, so too the concentrated mind can perceive its soul. Unless contemplation is aroused, the soul cannot be realized. Contemplation occurs only through expressing thoughts within. Words are certainly necessary, therefore, one must churn these words inside the mind and awaken oneself through their repeated utterances. Otherwise, sleep, which is always looking for an opportunity to sneak in will overtake one. If sleep does not embrace and if one keeps awake one will be haunted repeatedly by the thoughts of the world. It is because one's mind, which is devoid of right knowledge, will experience something lacking inside. In this condition, one needs to awaken the mind, thought and the meditative faculty. If these are not awakened, old mental impressions will overwhelm and saturate the mind with worldly knowledge and compel one to continue with one's old habits. This is known as spiritual ignorance connoting darkness within one's mind. This ignorance does not allow one to peep inside easily, and always pushes one outside.

To overcome this ignorance one has to awaken deep thinking to locate the hidden darkness of ignorance. On searching through reflection one will clearly observe the cause of all troubles is the insatiable passion for habitual pleasures, which can never get fulfilled by the objects. Through such reflection if one does not give the insatiable passion its object of pleasure, and if one endures the pain of constantly watching it patiently, in course of time both the thirst for pleasure and its sorrow, which are like an itching sensation, will leave. On their departure, the mind will become happy. Now this happiness, which is free from insatiable passion, belongs only to the soul, and is everlasting and independent of external objects.

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DAY 3

If a man renounces wicked deeds, if he adopts good conduct, endures the path of keeping awake and if he bears with mental discomfort, he will be able to endure the pain of having to sit in meditation for a long time. Being seated for meditation, if he forgets the world, he will enjoy the bliss of his soul while he is awake.

One must learn to listen to one's soul. In solitude, when the mind is in darkness, one should contemplate on the meaning of those words. The authors of the scriptures say that if a man has learnt even one word, he will be able to attain heaven, that is, the heaven inside his soul, where all his desires are fulfilled. After hearing righteous words like God, soul, virtue, sin, right faith etc., if he uses his intellect to reflect on them with subtlety and depth and if he imbibes them in his soul, he will achieve his goal. He will be absorbed in meditation. His mind will turn away from the world. If right knowledge is thus awakened in him, he will be able to recognise the fetters of insatiable passions, look deep into them, endure their sufferings and turn away from them to enjoy the bliss of his soul. That is salvation.

In order to turn one's knowlege inwards one has to think of a way of awakening inner thoughts through a few words. For that one has to endure some pain, whether it is the pain of being seated for meditation or of overcoming sleep. One must reflect upon the meanings of all the words of the scriptures one has heard. One must contemplate on them and adopt them in one's soul. If one can utter all the words one has heard in himself, and if one can hear them inwardly, it may be said that both the preceptor and the disciple are dwelling in one. One will speak and the other will listen and understand. Then one will develop right knowledge and adopt them in one's life. This is the awakening of knowledge within the soul, which leads to the opening of the inner eye.

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DAY 4

The habits which are formed during childhood become so strong that it becomes difficult to resist them. One feels it to be very painful to oppose those habits. Because of the pain involved no one desires to turn away from habits quickly, though his welfare lies there. In this state if a person endures pain, and if he is not deflected from the right path, it is called right faith.

Though one's destination may be quite far, one has to begin with at least a small effort. It becomes, therefore, essential for one to know as much of religious faith as is required to make a beginning on the right path with self restraint. First of all, one should realize the fact that the true self or the soul lies hidden in one. Owing to spiritual ignorance and lack of right knowledge one runs to the outside world to realise his ego. One has some experience of one's identity in the company of others. One feels lost not realising this identity. All one's actions and habits have been developed only to maintain that identity or ego. When old age accompanied by disease, arrives, man's pain and suffering become unbearable because he cannot come out of the clutches of the force of habit which he has cultivated since childhood. He feels entrapped.

However, there are three supports available for man to mould his life and escape from temporal sorrows and sufferings. These are : (1) Right Faith (2) Individual Consciousness and (3) Supreme Consciousness. All these supports are equally present in everyone. The other worldly supports will not last forever, because they are based on self interest. Impelled by nature man becomes dependent on them. It is seldom seen that a man seeks to help or serve others out of a sense of duty. If someone can serve himself rightly in his old age, then know that he has attained the right faith.

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DAY 5

To follow the path of right faith, what one has to learn first of all, is to develop the habit of self restraint. The first step is right religious confidence. After that the next step of right faith is mindfulness. Mindful meditation means the development of the habit of restraint. Then, after that, one needs right energy to prevent oneself from going on the wrong path. Lust, anger and greed are all objects of allurement, and are caused by a desire for worldly pleasures. When they dominate, wisdom cannot be exercised, only these impulses are there, and they have their own force. These impulses influence a man to such an extent that they destroy his intellect and that they develop tendencies of lust and anger and that they push him towards wrong tendencies.

Therefore, if a man develops understanding, and if he has the right energy to act accordingly, he can restrain himself. In order to have such right energy, he should go deep in himself and develop right knowledge through meditation. For that he has to adopt the five means of right faith as described by Bharavi, the great Sanskrit scholar poet in his great poetical composition *'Kiratharjuneeya'* : (1) Right religious confidence, (2) Right energy, (3) Mindfulness, (4) Meditation, and (5) Right knowledge.

When one is agitated by lust, anger etc. one must endure pain in order to restrain these passions and understand them through contemplation. The power of meditation does not let this pain subsist. Like electrical waves, passions such as lust, anger, greed, delusion, ego etc., give a man such a jolt from inside that they do not allow him to keep intact his intellect, which has the power to distinguish between right and wrong. In other words, they destroy wisdom. Whatever is done according to their dictates is not what a person ought to do.

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DAY 6

In order to understand the 'game-plan' of passions, a man should have right religious confidence. He must exercise self restraint and have a moment of contemplation. When one feels the force of nature within one, or when its impulse comes, if one is mindful even for a second, one will have a chance to restrain oneself. If that opportunity of one second is lost, and one is not mindful, then Nature, whatever its impulse, will at once make one perform such a deed that will later push one in the fire of repentance. There is no knowing where such an action provided by Nature will lead one to.

Attachment, aversion, suspicion, ego, delusion, ignorance etc., are all inner fetters and all these elements operate in a person. If one is not mindful, they start operating with full force and make one do wrong actions. The mother of all these fetters is ignorance and it is manifested only when the impulses of nature arise in the mind of a man. The mind is thought to be awakened only when some mindfulness is there, and when it can awaken contemplation. One should tell one's mind, "Wait a little before you do anything, think for a while." If one begins to think, at first, an element of meditation will enter one's mind. If one applies one's human wisdom, then he may have some right understanding. Whatever one understands in this way is right knowledge. If that knowledge starts developing, gradually, it will lead one to the realisation of God within. The element of knowledge has to be extended to accomplish this ultimate goal. Therefore, in life one must not do anything impulsively. One should cultivate the habit of acting after contemplation. If one develops the habit of thinking a little before doing anything, one will realise that the fetter of ego is indeed a bondage.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Established past deeds *(Vasana)*

Vasana is the name of that element that remains established in all living beings. These are similar to impressions *(sanskara)*. Just as the smell of ghee is established in the vessel it is kept, similarly the residue of knowledge and deeds established in the body is known as *vasana* or established past deeds. This impels a person again and again towards similar deeds through a strong impulse. This impulse keeps on driving other living beings like animals, birds etc. However, a human being is endowed with intellect with which he can awaken his knowledge to identify the *vasana* and their effect to get rid of the slavery of these established past deeds, through renunciation of transient pleasures and through austerity.

It is true that the deeds one has done are like the seed that gives rise to a tree with two branches. One of these branches is that which brings the consequences of the deeds in the form of pleasures and pains. It is called invisible destiny *(prarabdha)*. The second branch is that of established past deeds, which lie in the memory of the living beings and impel them to repeat those actions again and again. If a person, by awakening right knowledge through his intellect renounces the reward of his deeds, and if he is ready to endure the pain of that renunciation, the force of these established past deeds gradually peters away. It is known as the destruction of *vasana (vasanakshaya)*. When this is achieved in his mind, the soul manifested as right knowledge reveals a spontaneous joy like the joy of sound sleep, and this joy is established forever in a person free from these established past deeds. With the elimination of *vasana*, the mind also ceases to exist and it is known *manonasha*. It is thus imperative to tear away the veil of spiritual ignorance to realise the knowledge of the soul as bliss, for this process, which leads to Eternal Salvation (*Nitya-Mukti*).

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DAY 8

One should be observing mindfulness and restrain oneself carefully through right religious confidence, and determine the matter before one in totality. To think deeply before taking a decision is called meditation. This capability is present only in man, among all living beings. This kind of restraint is known as right faith. One who thinks before one acts is called an honest, thoughtful person. Acting after contemplation is mindfulness. One can find the right path only after contemplation.

Owing to the impulse of nature as in the case of an act of revenge for humiliation etc., the consequences are harmful in the outer world. Much more than that is the harm done to the soul residing within. This type of spiritual strangling mostly takes place because man does something in the outer world which throws him into so much perplexity that by worrying about it he cannot find happiness even in solitude, and that he ultimately faces disaster. He remains constantly worried and meditation becomes impossible for him. Only if a man's conduct is morally right, he can meditate in solitude. Through meditation, he will be able to exercise self-restraint. A man with self-restraint will ultimately be steady in his soul, and will attain that happiness in the waking state which he generally finds during sleep.

One should, therefore, develop the habit of acting after thinking with right religious confidence and then voluntarily move on that path. One will thus realise the truth of all wrong tendencies through right knowledge and will discover the significant truth of the fetters of ignorance, attachment, aversion etc., which bind everyone. These very fetters cause hostility and groupism and one is ready to harm others without caring about the ultimate consequences.

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DAY 9

Man's first duty, therefore, is that he should form the habit of acting after contemplation. To think is called mindfulness, to do something rightly is called right energy, and to act after contemplation is called right effort. The path of right faith is traversed with the help of all three — mindfulness, right energy and meditation. One must continuously monitor one's actions to avoid the influence of natural impulses, through due contemplation.

Whatever disasters happen in this world are all due to the impulses of nature, which make men act without contemplation. The forces of Nature persists in everyone right from childhood upto the time of death. It makes everyone act impulsively without thinking. In such a condition if one adopts the five elements of right faith i.e. right religious confidence, mindfulness, right energy, meditation and right knowledge, they impart the strength to overcome the forces of nature and to escape from the fetters. When Nature exerts a pressure, mindfulness will make one a little careful or vigilant. Right energy will make one restrained. Meditation will lead one to a clear intellect. When right knowledge dawns, one will be able to restrain oneself. That is why one needs to develop this five-fold force. One must perform all actions, even the routine ones, like cleaning the teeth, going to the toilet, bathing, washing, eating and drinking with mindfulness. While brushing the teeth if aversion towards someone enters the mind, one must make an effort to remove the aversion from the mind. If some affection crops up in the mind, one should try to eliminate that too. If pride or any other evil aspiration develops, one needs to dispel them. All these help to make life mindful, in the same way in which the smouldering fire is made ablaze by putting dry hay into it, and by blowing it with a blowpipe.

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DAY 10

Knowledge remains dormant in human beings. Wisdom and right knowledge are not awake inside the mind. There is a veil of nature called ignorance. All these, namely ego, affection, attachment, aversion, doubt, fear etc. are its offspring. These fetter men with trivial pleasures and pains. Therefore, in order to escape from them, and to obtain eternal bliss, one must endure some pain and also forgo some pleasures. Thus, one should do only such things as are conducive to one's perpetual good. This is known as right knowledge.

When inner knowledge becomes scattered outside, the soul becomes empty or hollow from within. Having become empty, the soul is eager for peace. But letting knowledge go astray outside in order to get external pleasures is not the way of peace. Whatever pleasures are obtained from outside do not continue. The soul, thus, does not achieve peace. In sleep one may get a few hours of pleasure. If the knowledge, which has gone astray, is liberated from outside, and if it is allowed to enter the inner soul, all the life force too will get accumulated there. In such a condition man will get happiness wherever he is seated. His soul will be contented at all times while talking, walking, eating or drinking. When right knowledge is lost, it seems as though the mind were not absorbed; as though some thought were worrying him and as though the mind were inclined only in that direction. Where a little pleasure is obtained, the mind is tempted only in that direction. All this is the fetter of insatiable passion and due to the manifestation of wants. One feels the lack of fulfilment in oneself. The soul becomes empty and needs to be filled. In order to fill it, if the mind remains focussed within, even vitality or vital force will remain inside, and one will enjoy happiness.

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DAY 11

When knowledge goes astray, there are several repercussions. The breathing becomes uneven and the mind is not happy. When the mind is enveloped in gloom, it wishes to sleep or drink and get intoxicated. Somehow a man tries to forget the uneasiness of his mind. This unhappy condition thus continues.

In order to consolidate right knowledge, and the life force that has strayed into the outer world, it is necessary for one to turn away from the outer world. The agitated, strangled, strayed and wrong passion for the outer world brings only trivial pleasures. That is why one should, somehow, awaken within right knowledge, the truth of one's life. In order to realize it one must know in his mind the fetters such as ego, affection, attachment, aversion, lust, anger etc., which keep one bound to the world. When one is able to recognise these impulses in himself, know that knowledge has returned within. While recognising these wrong tendencies, if one's breathing is harmonious, know that the life force has returned within. In this state, a man attains greater happiness while he is awake than while he is asleep. This is called the happiness of spiritual contemplation, salvation or absorbed meditation, one's final goal.

Thus right religious confidence, right knowledge, meditation, mindfulness and right energy are the elements of right religious faith. It is only through this five fold force that man attains salvation. This is the path of right religious faith. One has, therefore, to consolidate these five forces of liberation. One must develop the habit of contemplation before action. After that one should slowly develop the habit of acting in the outer world after one has thought about it. Thereafter one should sit alone, and meditate in one's mind and understand it. Gradually, acting like this, one will come to know of salvation. One will also come to know of fetters, of wrong tendencies, of pains and their causes, of one's worldly problems and their solutions.

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DAY 12

Three types of right conduct are to be observed by man. The first is external conduct, that is, doing all kinds of good deeds. The second is to meditate within and try to destroy all types of wrong tendencies such as lust, anger etc., and also to dispel the doubts that comes in the way while following the noble path of right faith. The third is the right knowledge needed to dispel the doubts of the mind. Right knowledge is the knowledge of the truth. It is to be developed through meditation. Right conduct which befits mankind means to perform good deeds in the outer world, to meditate within and to develop right knowledge through meditation.

All the scriptures state that fetters cannot be removed without right knowledge. The Vedas state thus : *rite gnanam na muktih*, that is, there is no salvation without right knowledge. Knowledge is indeed necessary. Man can restrain inspire and encourage himself to follow the right path only through right knowledge. Otherwise, the worldly fetters or the impulses and waves of Nature are so terrible and forceful that they will deflect any man from the right path.

There are six schools of philospophy pertaining to the Vedas. These are *Nyaya, Vaisheshik, Purva Mimansa, Uttara Mimansa (Vedanta), Sankhya* and Yoga. Among these, Nyaya and *Mimansa* are the two that help to determine right faith within. The meaning of *Nyaya* is to decide, judge or evaluate what is in one's interest on the basis of thought and wisdom. That is the justice within, conducted by the soul or individual consciousness.

Like *Nyayasastra* or philosophy of justice, there is another *Mimansa* philosophy. Whatever is decided by thought or a series of thoughts, about what is ultimately beneficial (serves one's interest the most) is called mimansa. A man must, thus, take a decision in his own ultimate interest through thought based on logic and argument.

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DAY 13

One who desires one's ultimate welfare has to determine wherein one's ultimate interest lies before taking any action. Now this is one's job as a judge to find out through logic and argument the veracity of the action proposed by mind . One has to discern the intention of the prejudiced mind behind the proposed action which might lead him to habitual actions and as a consequence lead one to several diseases and problems with endless grief and pain, beyond endurance. Keeping all this spillover of the wrong decision of the prejudiced mind in view, and with full consideration one must reject the decision of the deceitful mind. If one can decide one's path with his logical mind and if one can follow that path enduring pain, one is a true follower of *Mimansa*. If one does not awaken his inner logic and decide independently, it will then be difficult to avoid the path determined by one's nature, one's prejudiced mind, the path one has followed since his childhood and the path of the sense organs that one has followed so far. Remember, it is very difficult to escape the inner tendencies of the mind like attachment, aversion, ego, affection etc. that develop fetters. Unless a person is relieved from the slavery of these wrong tendencies dictated by the sense organs for receiving pleasure, he cannot attain his ultimate welfare. Therefore, while there is need for Mimansa (logic and argument), the intellect has to be made so aware that it should realize the true interest. *Mimansa* means right decision after contemplation. Whatever *Mimansa* one undertakes should be based on right thinking, logic and argument.

In essence, various types of wrong tendencies that develop in the mind, and the sense organs are always keen on looking for their path. The body is accustomed to following that path, and the man becomes a prisoner in their captivity. One must therefore strive to remain aloof of their hold and perform every act after contemplation.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Right Knowledge/Distinctive Knowledge *(Viveka)*

'Viveka' means understanding and recognizing an object as it is. For instance, all pleasures of nature end in endless pain and impel a person to a further pain. Right knowledge of this fact is also *viveka*. Pleasures of nature are not everlasting too. If this truth is revealed in the mind, it would also be called distinctive knowledge *(viveka)*. The pleasure one acquires on the path of nature develops such an intense fire of passion and never-ending thirst for the pleasure of the objects, that if a person thinks of satisfying this passion by providing its object, it will further multiply, and that it will entangle the mind in eternal pain. Distinctive knowledge means to clearly understand and to distinctly feel all this in mind through meditation. Through *Viveka*, a person will develop dispassion towards pleasures of nature and will practise restraint of his sense organs. This is a kind of austerity. Thus if sense organs are not allowed to enjoy the objects, the mind will not even think of them. This, indeed, is the spiritual power of keeping the mind restrained *(sama-sampatti)*. Restraining the mind that is inclined to move against the path of salvation, or to the contrary path becomes possible with this right knowledge *(viveka)* along with dispassion *(vairagya)*.

Right knowledge developed through contemplation develops into dispassion and cessation of the mind's cravings for the worldly objects. This is known as the spiritual power called *uprati-sampatti*. When the pain of worldly objects is revealed in the mind through this knowledge, all external objects and their pleasures appear tasteless and the mind does not wish even to think of them and develops the spirit of endurance of the pain that arises from the renunciation of the association with worldly objects, not feeling the pain caused to the mind by renunciation of the pleasures of the worldly objects. Also, *viveka* calms the bewilderment of the mind with faith and attains the joy of absorbed meditation.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) continued ....
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(90)

Nothing remains once obtained permanent,
All rewards worth regard for the moment;
How will you later on cater to your needs,
And staggering do endless struggling deeds?

(91)

Alone of one's own if one could not see pain,
How he simply can scan that of others?
If, then himself deigns pleasures to obtain,
What he may suggest the best for brothers.

(92)

Material intellect tells with matters reform,
Averse to rest on blessed emptiness to conform;
Rot individual lot turns out at length a blot,
Giving true bliss a miss for self is not forgot,

(93)

Brilliance of things, as in reliance is flashed at sight,
Since birth acquired, not much desired, but tough to fight;
Earnest in quest reflects on facts of past record,
Errors which bind with horror mind won't meet accord.

(94)

Charm, that wealth holds, is lost almost in cold old age,
Where profuse use of things is sin to envisage;
Prick then sore done for it, wrong heedless all past deeds,
Force of remorse as well, until death too exceeds.

(95)

Watch well your wealth unique that is of late obtained,
There is all likelihood of blessedness being constrained;
Not subject to objects, utility much futile,
Not slack to stay all ills, willing, alone, agile.

(96)

Passion is developed living in usual way,
As a body in motion goes on gathering force;
Man of keen clear insight feeling impulse of play,
May well bear up with pains but take reasonable course.

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DAY 15

There are six schools of philosophy pertaining to the Vedas in India. They may be considered in pairs : (1) *Nyaya* and *Vaisheshik*. (2) *Sankhya* and *Yoga* and (3) *Vedanta* or *Purva Mimansa* and *Uttara Mimansa*. These philosophies help human beings to understand the ultimate goal of life. A person's mind will not be purified unless he restrains his mind and sense organs, and adopts the triple paths of right action, right devotion and right knowledge. Thus we have three systems of instruction : (1) Path of *Karma* or Right conduct, (2) Path of *Bhakti* or Devotion, (3) Path of *jnana* or knowledge. Man has to resort to any of the three paths, understand their philosophical truths and implement them in his life to attain salvation.

Right conduct is the action which is performed in the right way for one's own welfare. Yoga in *mimansa* implies consolidating the mind towards meditation and following the path of truth determined through meditation. Then comes the final one, namely Vedanta. Three truths are conveyed through *Vedanta* : 1. Living being, 2. God, and 3. Divine dynamism that creates a gap between a living being and God. How is man to utilize all the three in his practical life? Vedanta shows us the practical ways to lead such a life as would enable us to reap the fruits thereof. So, Vedanta to be effective has to be implemented. Philosophy means a direct apprehension of the truth that can be proved by one's intellect. Unless one proves it, it does not turn into philosophy. There are these six schools of philosophy. If one has a direct apprehension of Vedanta, and if one realizes the true nature of the individual, the universe and its ultimate bliss, know then that he has realized them in one's life. Now all other schools of philosophy will also help him to realize this.

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DAY 16

A person's mind or soul will not be purified until he has restrained his mind and sense organs, and has led his mind on the path of right action, right devotion and right knowledge. He will always feel the duality in the universe and the individual. Even if he realizes that he is the universe only out of faith and not out of experience, it will not be a forceful feeling. The forceful feeling and experience will be there only when he has directly experienced this unity of the individual and the universe in his life. In order to have such an experience, he will have to treat this Vedanta philosophy in such a manner that it becomes an integral part of his life.

There are basically two kinds of life,the outer materialistic life and the inner spiritual life. An ordinary person has a physical existence. His sense organs are open to experience and they pursue what they like. Man tries to secure what the sense organs like even if he has to endure pain, or to make a sacrifice or even to die, and in this way, to bring to the mind pleasures that are to be found only in the outer world. This is materialistic life. In this life, one needs wealth and family and community and whatever is there in the outer world.

To live the other kind of spiritual life is to live in a way even while being detached from all others, to perform no wrong action, and moulding life according to what our thoughtful intellect tells us to do in our ultimate interest even when it means enduring pain or forgoing outer pleasure and practising austerity. If a person conducts his life in this way, he will have a direct apprehension of the universal consciousness and will attain supreme eternal bliss. When he is alone in his individual consciousness, he will realize bliss.

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DAY 17

As steel is smoothened by a file, so the fetters of attachment, aversion etc., are rubbed away by the ways discussed earlier and the person is relieved of his selfish nature. He gradually develops himself as a devotee of God and all his actions will be in accordance with the instructions in the scriptures and they will lead him to the path of God. Now, he has to further develop his individual consciousness to such a high level that he treats all living creatures alike. As it has been said in Sanskrit, this development of Soul (individual consciousness) leads to *Brahman* (universal consciousness).

All fetters subtly settled in a man impels him to undertake actions for his worldly pleasures. They make him do all wrong deeds. However, his right mind with right argument develops his personal soul which extricates him from all fetters, dispelling wrong impulses and he realizes the same soul or consciousness in all. He gradually renounces all worldly pleasures. He practises austerity to endure pain and he becomes so disciplined that he does not retain his worldly self that is inclined to selfish motives. With the disappearance of all the ten fetters, his earlier wrong self is transformed and his soul is manifested as bliss. When the practioner has seen his soul (consciousness) in that state of bliss where there is no wrong impulse and no fetters like attachment or aversion, that is, when he has realized his soul (consciousness) as bliss, as right knowledge and as truth, he will realize that the same soul (consciousness) dwells in others as does in him, but that it is hidden from others. So others find it as different souls in different persons because the wrong impulses and fetters in them have not so far disappeared. It does not mean that the soul within them is not pure, or that it is different from others, or that it is not present in them as eternal bliss.

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DAY 18

No one lives alone in this world. One has to live with others in the world. Impulses will come from everywhere, and they will have some effect on human beings. One has to constantly dispel the undesirable impulses coming from others through one's right tendencies and with the thought that the dead cannot live and that hollow people can have no mind. In other words how can one live with a dead mind ? After all, one cannot sit in closed doors or sit in a cave. So one must learn to live among people peacefully.

Life in the family or in the world runs on the basis of friendship. If there is no harmony in family life, the members cannot live in peace. One has to be happy in the happiness of every member of the family. This is known as friendship. Similarly, in life, whether in his family or in the community, one must share the happiness of others. It is true that everybody feels happy in the happiness of those who serve their interest. This leads to the development of a community or a family as well as a cordial friendly relationship.

A self realized person has to develop the feeling that he will have friendship not for his self-interest, not for the happiness of anyone that serves his interest; on the contrary his friendship lies in the happiness and welfare of all. He is happy in their happiness. One should be kind-hearted to everyone in trouble. One who adopts the path of God should have the feeling that one is happy and full of praise for the noble qualities of everyone. One, who treads the path of noble right faith, should have the right conduct towards all, irrespective of others' conduct towards him. This is called dispassion. Our ancestors called it noble conduct. People who practise such dispassion have been called *Aryans* in the *Vedas*. *Aryan* means noble.

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DAY 19

If one follows right conduct, then how can one's soul (consciousness) regard others in the outer world as malacious? When one does not regard others as malacious, how will it raise the impulse of malice in others ? When such impulses do not arise, how will they cause any misery ? One will have the same happiness from others as to from one's own soul (consciousness). At least, one will not have any misery caused by them. Well, thus one's soul (consciousness) expands to *Brahman* (cosmic consciousness). One will not have any doubt or fear from outside and will not have to needlessly think of one's duty. When this is not required, one's mind is free. When the mind is free, one will have the same happiness while awake as he finds during sleep. This is the happiness of liberation. But when will one attain it? It is only when these miseries caused by fetters cease to exist. When the opposite thing takes place, that is, forces opposed to the fetters are developed. In place of the fetters like attachment or aversion, powers of dispassion and forgiveness are developed.

For all this to happen one needs the basic ten powers, so often discussed earlier. One needs to be reminded of their significant role on the path and hence these are briefly mentioned here again. The first is friendly attitude meaning to be happy in the happiness of others. The next is compassion which means having sympathy for others in their misery. It is not that one has always to do something for them. That may be beyond one. But one must not lack compassion. And this compassion, that is to say the feeling for others' suffering should not be limited only to human beings, but extended to all living creatures of whatever kind. Thus one should have sympathy for them in one's mind. This is known as true compassion.

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DAY 20

The third force that empowers a seeker on the path is *Mudita* or praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others. Being tied to nature and enslaved to self-interest, man's conduct or whatever he does, is not proper. All his activities like seeing or hearing may cause misery to the seeker. In that state of misery he will say that the other man is at fault and that he is evil. But, evil is one who has vices. If the seeker sees the other man's vices, he will be angry and may be impelled to do wrong to the other man. But, instead of looking at the other man's vices, if the seeker looks at his virtues, and if he keeps even a minor virtue of his (the other person's) in his mind and if he feels happy on seeing it, and if he applauds him, there will be no aversion in the seeker's mind for him, no anger and no impulse to do wrong to him. All this will happen to one, who gradually develops the habit of looking at the virtue of others, making efforts to discover virtues in others, and pretending not to have seen their vices. If the seeker does not behave in this manner, the vicious circle of nature will start operating.

The fourth is to to show indifference towards the vices that the seeker may have noticed in someone and which shows him (someone) as a rogue and which makes him cause pain. The seeker should behave like a father who looks at the virtues of his son and ignores his son's fault (though covertly trying to mend it). It means not to look at others' vices, to show indifference towards them, and not to brood and bother much over them (upkesha).

In this way, these four powers of liberation belong to the one who follows the divine path, and that overcomes worldly desires and that examines his soul (consciousness) and that develops his consciousness. Ignoring all the fetters, he realizes his own soul or consciousness in himself and thus develops cosmic consciousness or attains *Brahman*.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Dispassion *(Vairagya)*

Dispassion means turning away from whatever worldly pleasure is visible or whatever is acquired through sense organs by association with worldly persons and objects. It is living without the insatiable passion for those pleasures. If one can develop this dispassion through right knowledge *(viveka)*, it becomes an important tool or a bridge for his salvation. At first this dispassion is developed by visualizing pain in the worldly pleasures.As the power of thoughts grows, a person then examines or analyses the lives of others through right knowledge to see the end of these worldly pleasures. When the seeker realizes that these pleasures will lead him to diseases, sorrows and many other pains of bewilderment and that they will move him further on the path of enmity, conflict, struggle, violence, falsehood, wrong conduct and many other types of sins, he starts disassociating from those pleasures. If one takes time out of one's worldly activities, if one sits in meditation and if one spends more time in understanding the life through contemplation and if one remains absorbed in meditation, throughout one's life, he will develop dispassion towards all objects and persons of outer life and the ego, comfort and relaxation etc. of his inner life. As the duration of meditation increases, the person will develop dispassion towards the subtle pleasures of all kinds. He would pledge for a life of equanimity in pleasure and pain, will turn away from all fetters, will visualize the end of all pains in meditation, will spontaneously attain the bliss of the soul in himself. Ultimately experiencing this extended (universal) soul, becoming one with God manifested as the soul of all living beings, the fetters of others too can not disturb his peaceful bliss. One thus realizes the universal life and attains the complete knowledge of cosmological consciousness *(Brahmajnana)*.

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DAY 22

If friendly attitude, compassion, praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others and showing indifference towards the faults of others—all these four powers of liberation are present in one's mind, who in the world is not one's friend and who can be one's foe ? With whom can one not interact and of whom will one be afraid ? But if one does not develop these powers in oneself through meditation in solitude, then one's lifeless, hollow mind will hesitate to interact with anyone and one will not be able to sail the boat of his life smoothly.

One's conduct is the manifestation of one's feelings that lie within. Whosoever a living creature may be, one should have the feeling that one has to maintain right conduct in accordance with the right faith. Right conduct means the conduct that is not unpleasant to others. This is the fifth power of liberation. For that one needs to give up one's ego which acts as a great barrier on the path. This process of giving up one's ego is called renunciation. This is indeed a great sacrifice. One has to do it on one's own. Without this no one can experience the bliss of liberation while being alive.

The next or the sixth force for liberation is mental tolerance and intellectual forgiveness. That is to say, that in spite of experiencing unhappiness or misery, inflicted by someone on him, if a person does not have a desire to punish him, it will be considered that he has developed mental tolerance and intellectual forgiveness. Such a person keeps his mind calm and thinks that it does not matter. He realizes that if the other person has done something wrong, he did it under the force of some habit, and that the poor fellow has no control to dispel his wrong impulses.

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DAY 23

The next or the seventh power of liberation is the spirit of renunciation/self sacrifice/charity. Thinking of pursuing the path of right faith instead of that of the world, if one renounces one's ego, then, it is a great renunciation. Then the person acquires these seven powers of God, in varying measures. The more the measures of these powers are present in him, the more successful and peaceful will be his life in the outer world. He will be free from all types of fears of the world. Fear is manifested as misery, the fire of which burns him. The conduct of other people does not seem to be right to a man who cannot set things right on his own.

The eighth power of God is right efforts or energetic occupation to put forth or right energy. In the Bhagavad Gita, three gates of hell have been mentioned—lust, wrath and greed. Man can do good to himself only if he renounces them. Lust means desire. Man's mind is tempted by what appears pleasant. He is so tempted that he cannot even exercise his power of judgement and that he blindly follows to acquire that. Whatever way the desire leads a man, he acts accordingly. In Sanskrit, it is said, *Kamakantau* (desire tempts)". It means anything that looks pleasant tempts as if it were saying, "Come and possess me." This is lust. Further these desires are not limited or numbered, as all the sense organs have their desires. As it is said in the Bhagavad Gita, the sense organs lead to aversion. Desire is the offspring of attachment. Attachment for an object pulls one towards that object just as a magnet attracts iron. As soon as one happens to see some desirable object, he is pulled towards it. This pull is called lust or desire. If one resists its path, the obstruction of its flow leads to anger. Right effort means realization of one's vices, to awaken right knowledge in oneself, to investigate truth and discover what is ultimately good for oneself. This is the path of right faith.

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DAY 24

The next power of God, the ninth in the series is meditation. If a person learns to make right efforts, it will not be difficult to meditate. Meditation is obstructed only by the wrong tendencies and fetters. When the mind is lonely, it falls a victim to spiritual ignorance and it is puzzled. Instantly, worldly impressions will arise, desires will pull in that direction and one will make efforts only in that direction. Only that object will appear pleasant or desirable.

The scholars of the scriptures have mentioned five obstacles to meditation : wrong viewing, doubt, desire, anger and slothful sleep. If one can, through right efforts, start overcoming all these five wrong tendencies, know that one's mind will be absorbed even in solitude. The way to realize the inner truths will open up and the mind will be united with the inner self. Yoga means union with the inner self. One must thus remain oblivious of the outside world through constant contemplation. Remaining oblivious of the outer world, awakening of the inner mind, contemplation and realisation of the inner truths are the stages of yoga or meditation. The more one unites one's mind with one's soul (inner self or consciousness), the more he will start realizing the inner truths. One will also understand the truth and tricky manipulation of the fetters like affection, anger and other such wrong tendencies that keep flowing in the mind. One will also develop inspiration and courage to destroy these wrong tendencies and ultimately the well disciplined seeker will witness the end of these fetters by keeping them in view, and by enduring the pain caused by them. Inner peace will be directly experienced as soon as these wrong tendencies depart.

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DAY 25

As much as one is not united with one's soul (consciousness), one's mind will look towards the outward world. It cannot remain without knowledge. It cannot remain in ignorance. In that state it is not happy. The mind is then always in doubt of its own existence, as if it perished and as if ruined itself. Therefore, in this state of spiritual ignorance, the mind feels miserable and awakens the worldly impressions, and then moves about in the world with all its affections and for the satisfaction of its ego. One should awaken one's inner right knowledge to resist these wrong impressions. The union with inner self is yoga. Throughout one's life starting from childhood, one acquires the knowledge of the objects of the world, by means of one's sense-organs and mind, while pursuing different professions. At any rate the fruit of this knowledge is very limited and ephemeral, and ends when one becomes old and when one lacks physical strength. The only plausible path is to be integrated with one's soul (consciousness) that right knowledge manifests within it without any external object, source or cause. To attain the eternal happiness on this path one needs to dispel spiritual ignorance.

The fact of the matter is that when the mind is vacant, it feels that he has lost something and is lacking something. Then, one's mind is turned to pursue the path of insatiable passions to make up for that loss. When one realizes all the truths in one's mind, one knows that the vacant mind is a sign of spiritual ignorance. One realizes this truth only when one develops the habit of studying the impulses arising in it by integrating his mind. If one is thus watchful, and if one bears the sufferings caused by controlling one's impulses for pleasure, and if one remains absorbed within, without falling asleep, God, manifested as right knowledge, will be so awakened in one that one will enjoy bliss.

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DAY 26

The tenth force of liberation is truth-bearing knowledge. A person gets the best results if he disciplines his life, adopts the ten powers of liberation, and develops the habit of meditation after dispelling his wrong tendencies. One must lead a noble life in the outer world, focus on meditation within, and learn by analyzing the truths through meditation. During the course of learning these truths, it should become evident that whatever one wanted to learn has been learnt, and that one has attained the inner soul (consciousness), which is devoid of suffering without any external cause or source. Such a realized soul has no worry or fear. A person who wishes to enjoy spiritual fruits must exercise counter efforts according to the precept laid in the *Yog Darshan* : *"Pratiprasau heya sukshma,"* meaning "Realize the truth of subtle sufferings and develop the contrary powers of liberation". What can frighten a person who does not do any wrong to anyone? When one neither does any wrong nor when one thinks of doing wrong, this all-pervasive *Brahman* holds no fear for him, and he will attain fearlessness. When a man attains peace in his soul (consciousness), his life will be noble and he will be liberated. A person has to discipline himself to this extent.

The need for these five powers : confidence in right faith, right efforts, mindfulness, meditation and truth bearing knowledge, will persist in a man to the day of his death. At first, one needs confidence in right faith and the habit of doing the right action after contemplation of the truth. When one severs one's relationship with the world and gets integrated with his soul (consciousness), and develops the habit of action after right contemplation, this integration will increase so much that it will lead one to the investigation of the truth. One will then look for the right conduct, will overcome sleep, renounce the pleasures of wrong habits, realize the truth and the way to live in peace.

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DAY 27

Bhagawan (God) has blessed the human species with a unique power called intelligence and intellectual ability *(buddhi or viveka)*. If a human being decides to lead his life as per the directions of his unique power of intelligence and intellectual ability, his whole life can be free from most of the worldly vices and their resultant pains and sufferings. When a person lives and leads his present life intelligently and wisely not only his present life will be peaceful and blissful but even his next future life will be without any untoward, adverse, negative and painful effects. There is a world beyond the external world and there is a life beyond the present life.

Religious scriptures declare that a human being should cultivate and develop two specific capabilities : (i) to recognize and assess the actual reality (knowledge or the ability to differentiate as to what is beneficial or harmful to the human being), and (ii) to execute (implement and practise) this knowledge with conviction (boldly and bravely) for his well being and welfare. To achieve this objective one must thoroughly undertake self-examination, self-study and self-assessment. After knowing one's mistakes and weaknesses, one can decide and develop the habit to mend and improve oneself. As a first step, one will have to make a conscious effort to know and understand one's own person. Thereafter, one will resolve to rectify and improve one's personality, and thereby, one's life will become smooth, peaceful and purposeful. This whole process is called self-examination, self-study and self-assessment.

The great Hindu religious scholars recommend and preach that every person should live and that he should lead his life according to the laid down, and ordained principles. In Sanskrit language, the saying is *"dharma rakshti, rakshitah"* meaning : "If one honours and if one respects the religious principles, these religious principles will protect and preserve him." *Dharma* denotes the religious path.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Practice of Austerity *(Tapa)*

Austerity means to resist the power of nature that runs the life of all living beings with desire, anger etc. and mindfully enduring the pain caused by proceeding on the path against it or proceeding on the path of salvation. Austerity means endurance of pain caused in the mind by proceeding against the path of nature. An austere person is one who patiently endures the pain caused by the resistance to nature and who keeps his sense organs, mind and intellect under restraint or control. If a person is not disturbed by the pain of this austerity, and if he keeps sitting in meditation for a long time enduring this pain, it fully helps in understanding and overseeing the pain of all passions, in bringing freedom from all pains and in attaining absorbed meditation and supreme salvation. This austerity is practised in the self or in the inner consciousness of a person. Similarly, if a person with a peaceful mind endures whatever pain is caused in the external world by many factors including pain caused by association with others, loss of respect etc., wrong words or enmity of others etc., it will bring great power to the person who practises such austerity.

Austerity of course is of many types. There is the external extreme austerity which is practised by many austere persons like always standing or enduring the painful heat of fire or the scorching heat of the sun or standing in cold water, enduring hunger for many days, enduring the pain of bitter cold weather by remaining naked or not sleeping at night etc. For the path of salvation, moderate austerity or enduring the pain of the mind caused by renouncing all that is more than bare necessity of the body is considered suitable.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend) Continued ....

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(97)

Fraught with consequences believed not to receive,
Element of passion lessens not to deceive;
Gives it rise to unwise impulses to amuse,
Viewing new existence by sleep or death confuse.

(98)

Mind in impression's sphere, from world of contact dives,
Inducing indolence and sleep-like states survives;
Not meeting right response makes for death to extend,
New world, new existence, as blind elements tend.

(99)

Bodies are quite distinct of wakeful state and dream,
But sequence of events same being perceives in stream;
That moves in various lands and sleep could not destroy,
Know them for certain friend, death won't turn out kill joy.

(100)

It is bold enough to say or hold fast,
Consciousness dies as body goes at last;
Body is like as dead, in dream we assume,
Stays but consciousness its play to resume.

(101)

Guard well those moments where mind is vacant,
As immanent peace may shine dominant;
No wind of worldly wish, in you should blow,
Think if must, seek how, mind keeps empty flow.

(102)

Into emptiness mind if does not slide,
In controlled self seek vent anger and pride;
Good god, superman in image remained,
Not world is slain for no powers obtained.

(103)

Spiritual living leads one to immense quiet and calm,
Nature's mode of life ends in endless doubts and qualms;
For keeping with restraint pure consciousness is safe,
With no conditions free and empty not in chafe.

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DAY 29

Every living being tries to avoid and escape from the painful situation and is attracted towards what is comfortable and enjoyable. That pain and suffering is an essential ingredient of life is an accepted universal fact and one must learn to live with them in a decent and logical way. The word austerity *(tapa)* implies some pain and suffering. A person should willingly accept and tolerate such pain and suffering, but he should not accept the wrong way of life to live and lead life impulsively for the immediate gratification of his temptations. *Bhagwan* (God) will definitely shower His blessings and ensure the well-being and welfare of that person who respects and honours the directions of his inherent intelligence *(buddhi)* and of discriminating intellectual force *(viveka)*. Without getting impulsive and instinctive, when a person first objectively and rationally examining, discussing, deliberating, understanding derives the conclusions, this method is in accordance with his buddhi and vivek and is known as the religious way and guarantees inner peace and social harmony. Sitting alone in solitude, he should cultivate the habit of introspection and self-study.

Whosoever maintains his mental equilibrium and inner poise with the help of his his inherent intelligence and intellectual capabilities, will definitely protect and preserve his elevated and admired status of a human being. His control of his impulsive tendencies and compulsive instinctive behaviour will in course of time lead him to the realization of his spiritual salvation *(mukti)* and it will also raise that person to the higher citadel of a spiritually-evolved celestial being *(devata)*. That is why, as a first step, a person should strongly resolve to live and lead his life very carefully and cautiously with the help of inherent intelligence and discriminating intellectual abilities, as symbolized in *a yagyopaveet* ceremony of tying three cotton threads in unison around the bust of a mature child.

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DAY 30

Yagnopaveet ceremony for the mature child, very common and in vogue in earlier times had a great significance. This ceremony-tying of three delicate threads of cotton around the bust-symbolized that the person has now been restricted and restrained by socio-religious ceremonies *(yajna)*, just as one restricts and restrains a person by tying him with a rope. In other words, *Yagno-paveet* represents that the person has been restricted and restrained by wrapping three symbolic threads of responsibilities and rules (regulations), and henceforth, the person should behave towards and interact with other people with maximum care and caution. Henceforth, the carefree and self-indulgent life of the child is over; and the person must feel responsible and answerable for his actions, reactions, interactions and transactions with his fellow-beings in the society. This is known as 'fellowship feelings', *(sangatikarna)*, or to be responsible for one's behaviour in his social setup. The second aspect of *'Yagno-paveet'* implies that the person should devote and dedicate himself for practising religious rituals and ceremonies. The third aspect of *Yagno-paveet* implies that the person should give up his egoistic feelings of self-importance and self-pride. This is also termed as *daana* (donation). This third aspect, also implies that the person should admire and appreciate the merits and virtues of other persons and he should cultivate in himself these merits and virtues. Thus *Yagno-paveet* stands for three objectives : (i) *Sangati-Karan* (fellowship feelings), (ii) *Pooja* (religious worship and commitment) and (iii) *Daana* (donating and giving up of feelings of self-importance).

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OCTOBER

Importance of Introspection

Introspection is the art of going inwards with the aim of understanding ourselves, our nature, motives, hidden desires, defects and so on. Like concentration it is an important tool of meditation. Man often thinks that he knows himself as well as others very well and forms impressions, opinions and even judgments about everyone and everything. Nothing can be farther from the truth. All that we think we know is biased and incomplete as it is based on the mind, which is a partial instrument. Having learnt to sit in solitude and to watch our breath for some time we are able to attain a certain reflective mood. Next we must go deep within and try to find out more about ourselves. We should review our daily transactions and find out if there was any lapse or mistake in our thoughts, words or deeds: "Why did I behave like that? What was my motive? Did I understand the other person correctly?" Such and similar questions will reveal our inner motives, weaknesses and negativities. We should introspect regularly to dig out all our mental fetters, negative thoughts and feelings, wrong impressions and prejudices. Introspection will make us alert to everything that we do, speak or think and correct ourselves. Gradually our minds will become very light and free and fit for meditation.

Editor

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Day 1



OCTOBER

What constitutes humanhood? In other words what entitles a living being to the status of a human being? The main qualities and cardinal capabilities which enable a living being to acquire the status of a human being are : (i) the capability to think, and (ii) cultivate and develop the capability to put (translate) his thinking abilities into actual, concrete practice and action. In everyday life, in the evening or before going to sleep, a person should sit up in formal, erect yogic posture and meditate, keeping in mind his chosen '*Prabhu*'. *Prabhu* denotes and represents that supreme being or spiritual entity (*Bhagwan*) who is omnipresent (all pervasive), omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing) and universal source head of eternal bliss. One should not bother whether he has actually seen Him or not. He should instead keep that supreme spiritual entity *(Prabhu)* very much fixed and focused in his mind's eye. Whatever prayer and supplication for protection, preservation, well-being and welfare one solicits and seeks, one should submit to Him *(Prabhu)* with complete devotion and dedication in simple words, incorporating the wrong actions carried out by one during the day and praying for pardon for one's irrational behaviour or doings.

When a man conducts self-analysis and self-assessment in this manner, through his unique capability to analyse and assess the inner feelings and instinctive reactions in restrospection, and also when he mends and modifies his behaviour throughout his life, he will surely preserve his 'human being' status in the next birth. However, when a person finds himself incapable of applying his intelligence, his intellectual ability and his rational faculties, the ancient seers suggest the alternative for him to adopt and observe some religious practice, persistently to regulate his daily life.

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DAY 2

One should recite *'Gayatri Mantra'* (religious supplication) before undertaking any work. In simple words, *Gayatri Mantra* is a supplication to God Almighty through His divine representative, the Sun. At sunrise all the living beings wake up from the darkness of death like sleep. The *mantra* denotes: "O *Bhagwan*! Bless me to pursue righteous and noble ways throughout my life. The words righteous and noble ways mean : to act rationally, thoughtfully, carefully and cautiously with the help of intelligence and intellectual capabilities.

The supplication in *Gayatri Mantra* submits "O *Surya Narayan* ! O Sun ! I focus my mind on your resplendent and radiant face, which may brighten the path of my existence with the power of *buddhi* (intelligence and intellect). Teach me as to what is what and what deed will lead to what result ? In short, if a person maintains and if he preserves his intelligence and intellect in all his actions (and if he does not act impulsively and compulsively under the force of his impulses and instincts) then he can be called a rational human being. A person should thus pray to *Bhagwan* to protect him from his inner vices, his habitual compulsions and his impulsive instinctive tendencies, after introspection, self-assessment and self study. Through such mental education he becomes adept in self-examination. He is able to know how his desire and lust, anger, attachment, aversion, self pride, greed, prestige etc. affect his actions, reactions, transactions and interactions. Now he recognizes and acknowledges their existence in the depth of his mind. But he must resist and restrain their dominance in his life, through (i) recognizing the inner vices and weaknesses (ii) fighting against those inner vices and weaknesses and (iii) keeping the mind under the control of his higher faculties of intelligence and intellect. When one succeeds in his efforts, he discovers the path of his divine deliverance, his *mukti*.

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DAY 3

The human mind is extremely restless. There is no moment when it is calm and quiet. This is because of vital energy or '*Prana-shakti*' generated by two distinct process of breathing-in and breathing-out. The process or respiration (which is called '*Pranayama*' or the science of breathing exercises) generates vital-energy or *prana-shakti*. This vital energy or *prana-shakti* is the creative power of *Bhagwan* of 'life force' *(elan-vital)* and is the main source which energises physical body and makes it dynamic and active. Life-force or vital energy or *prana-shakti* is the fountain-head of all the living species in the whole universe. *Prana-shakti* is the creative power or *kriya shakti* (dynamic force) of Bhagwan through which He created life and all the living beings in the whole universe. God also incorporated consciousness into the living matter. Consciousness is the divine power of awareness or knowledge or *Jnana*.

As a first step, gradually and slowly a person has to identify and understand his kriya-shakti or dynamic force (which usually assumes the form of instinctive urges, habitual temptations, human vices and weaknesses), and then at the second stage, he must find the ways to resist and restrain his vices and weaknesses with all his might. His fight should be aggressive, intensive as well as extensive, with full commitment. He has also to be vigilant of the temptation for sleep in his pursuit. Thus a person who acquires inner peace and mental tranquility by restraining and restricting the virulence of these inflamed forces, becomes the personification of *Bhagwan Shankar*, the commander God of animal tendencies i.e. of *tamoguna*, and attains *moksha* during this life experiencing bliss.

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DAY 4

With the help of discerning intelligence and discriminating intellect *(buddhi)*, a person should constantly and continuously protect himself from the compulsive and impulsive forces of his nature *(prakriti)* and fortify his mind to such an extent that his mind is able to recognize, recall and remember the identity and image as well as the defects and demerits of his inherent (hidden) vices and weaknesses (which motivate the human mind to indulge in ignoble and evil deeds) in the external world. He should develop the capability to fully comprehend how the irresistible forces of insatiable desires *(trishna)* push and pull his mind in certain preset and predetermined directions; how anger dominates and determines his behaviour; how greed, selfishness, conceit and selfpride rule all his social inter-actions. With the help of his intelligence and intellect *(buddhi)*, he should start comprehending and understanding each and every aspect of his inherent vices and weaknesses. One has to eliminate and annihilate his inherent vices and weaknesses with all his might. When one successfully does it, he will experience divine peace and contentment, which is the hallmark of *mukti* (spiritual salvation). Also the seeker will automatically develop the attitude of the nonpartisan and mental witness, without any personal involvement in his activities.

He has thus to cultivate a neutral and passive attitude, and to develop the capacity and capability to remain peaceful and remain unaffected under all types of provocations created by the forces of prakriti or divine dynamism *(maya)*. Having attained that, his mind will always remain peaceful and tranquil, as if there were no nature *(prakriti)* or divine dynamism *(maya)* of the material world. Having developed a deep insight and knowledge about his inner self or his *atma*, his inner self *(atma)* will experience and enjoy the unique celestial bliss.

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DAY 5

The human mind has misconstrued and misinterpreted the import and implication of the concept of death, because of its ignorance *(avidya)*. Because of this inherent ignorance *(avidya)*, the human mind regards it as a segregation from the material world forever and as permanent destruction and eternal dissolution. One should not be afraid of death because death is not a permanent segregation. Death implies only change, from one stage to another stage. The inner self *(atma)* transfers itself from one corporeal frame (physical body) to another corporeal frame (physical body). One's *atma* is a part and parcel of *Paramatma*, the universal, all-pervasive, eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, all-blissfull, Supreme Soul.

Because of his ignorance *(avidya)* a human being is afraid of death. In reality, he is afraid of separation and segregation from the persons and products of the external world because of his extreme attachment for them and involvement in the mundane world. A human being will fear death as long as he remains enticed and engrossed with the persons and products of the external world. But to lead a life for the gratification of habits is not at all admirable and praiseworthy because the habitual mind gives up all care and caution offered by inherent intelligence and the discriminating intellect.

Only the human being is blessed with the higher capabilities of intelligence and intellect which enable him to think, analyse and assess as to what is useful and fruitful for his ultimate welfare and well-being. Through austerity *(tapasya)*, if the human being controls his desires and the gratification of his habits, then he will be able to realize his spiritual salvation *(mukti)*, by employing his superior intelligence and discriminating intellect.

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DAY 6

Every human being should preserve and protect his two precious jewels; intelligence (problem- solving capability) and intellect (discriminating capability), to achieve both objective (material) gains and subjective (spiritual) realities. Many times, realised saints bless their dedicated disciples by putting a necklace made of beads of *rudraksh* or *tulsi*, symbolizing the priceless pearls of intelligence and intellect and ordain to the disciple to be always mentally alert and watchful against the insatiable desires giving rise to all types of fetters.

When a person disengages and disentangles himself from the selfish and egoistic small circle of "you and me" or "your and mine", when a man liberates himself from his narrow network of social actions, reactions, interactions and transactions, dominated by minor gains and limited interests, when a person makes consistent and persistent efforts to emancipate his mind from his fetters with the help of introspection and meditation, he easily and quickly develops insight into the universal, spiritual realities and finds no hurdles in merging his individualized soul *(jivatma)* with the universal soul *(Paramatma)*. Such a spiritually-evolved person vividly witnesses the colossal drama of birth-death-rebirth, with the help of his celestial knowledge *(brahmajnana)*. He is not afraid of death, as he is aware that it does not cause permanent dissolution.

The mantra Aum in the Upanishads, is constituted by three syllables, representing Creation, Preservation and Dissolution—the great colossal drama of God. "The word 'Aum' stands for *Paramatma*.The past, the present and the future, all these three phases or tenses of time,are manifestations of Omkar or AUM (*Paramatma*) who is all-inclusive. To understand all this, it is essential and obligatory for the human mind to develop in itself the spiritual capacity to unravel and excavate the spiritual truths, that are lying hidden in the deep recesses of the human psyche.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Endurance *(Titiksha)*

Endurance *(titiksha)*, means a desire for renunciation. It means the desire to renounce all that a person seeks to do to avoid the state of pain including the lack of any desire to make efforts to improperly escape from pain by crying, showing anger, irritation and worry.

In brief, it means enduring the pain or sorrow caused by renouncing worldly pleasures by a person who moves on the path of salvation without worrying or crying over it, keeping the mind healthy and not trying by other means to dispel the pains that are being endured on account of this renunciation. A person must endure these pains and keep the intellect steadfast to attain that power which brings steadfastness in times of pain. He must endure the pain by this steadfastness so that these pains are of their own dispelled without any external step bring peace and happiness. This, indeed, is the bliss of salvation. Endurance is the main step for this salvation.

(1st Weekend) continued ...

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(104)

Level of consciousness, hail, with fullness of life,
Richness of harmony keeps with but no dual strife;
Light of keen intellect where clear and nicely clean,
Bears sinless, harmless mind in wrong acts never seen.

(105)

I suffered loss of things of precious possessions,
Slides slow and shaky mind back into impressions;
With what, not opened eye in blessedness lying ahead,
Weak confidence, wrong acts, faith lives but almost dead.

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DAY 8

The real and true happiness is that which originates from one's inner self or which emanates from one's soul or spirit *(atma)*. When one thoughtfully considers and critically examines with an objective and unbiased mind this fact, one will realize that his soul or spirit *(atma)* is part and parcel of the supreme soul *(Paramatama)* or the universal, all-pervasive, omnipotent, omnipresent God. At the individual, personal level, it is called soul or spirit *(atma)* and at the universal, all pervasive level, it is called supreme soul or *Paramatma*. When one considers and admits *atma* and Paramatma to be the same spiritual entity as one, it is called "*Brahmadarshan*" in spiritual parlance.

From the moment of his birth, the human being, because of his ignorance, always keeps his mind entangled in the outer world and develops ties of various types with different persons and objects, which do not allow him to take notice of his own inner self or spirit. Through his attachments with the objects of the external world he feels comfortable. Further, when the person tries to disentangle himself from the worldly, material objects, then he starts feeling sleepy i.e. the mental inertia and attitudinal inactivity(*tamoguna*). If the person overcomes both these weaknesses, that is (i) attachment and attraction for the material objects of the mundane world, and (ii) temptation to indulge in the lassitude and lethargy induced by sleep, by energizing, activating his inherent powers with the help of his intellectual capabilities (i.e. his inherent discriminating, differentiating and discerning abilities), and if he, knowingly, voluntarily and wilfully, disengages and disentangles his mind from the external mundane world, and instead if he starts getting interested to watch and witness the inner world of his divine soul and celestial spirit *(atma)*, then the person will certainly savour and relish the divine bliss of his *atma*, the real and true happiness of his soul or *atma*, which is very sacred and satisfying.

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DAY 9

The common belief is that it is not humanly possible to disengage and distentangle one's mind—a prerequisite of knowing the soul — from the worldly commitments and material pursuits. It may be made possible if one proceeds in a systematic and planned way. First of all, one has to understand how and why the worldly objects and persons have overpowered him to monitor his life and how to get rid of them. Great philosophers and thinkers uphold and preach that (i) slaughtering living animals, (ii) telling lies and practising deception, (iii) stealing and snatching (iv) misconduct and evil behaviour and (v) addiction to drugs and intoxicants are five greatest evils *(mahapapa)*. When a person tries to avoid these five great evils, then he gets rid of most of the material objects of the mundane world automatically.

Any action committed by a person may cause a reaching consequences for him and to others whom one interacts with. As a result one starts harbouring in his mind various types of emotions, fears, anxieties and assumptions which his mind cannot ignore or express openly in the external world. These may generate negative feelings of hostility and aversion in his mind, vitiate the mental peace of the person, and will not let his mind turn inwards, introspect and meditate, and instead will push his mind towards the external material world to be entangled there. Once the mind is liberated from the external engagements, enticement and entanglements of the world, and gets concentrated to start introspection and meditation, the person will easily and vividly experience his unique divine entity, his *atma* or self or soul, and realize salvation *(mukti)* the ultimate aim of human existence.

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DAY 10

Renouncing and withdrawing from the mundane world entails the greatest reward a person can achieve. But only that person who completely withdraws his mind from the external world and who earnestly seeks that object which can provide him complete inner contentment can achieve this reward. To that end, the elimination of negative feelings and augmenting positive attitude and healthy mental bias are essential. This difficult task can be achieved by that person who can subjugate, eliminate and eradicate his negative feelings and unhealthy mental bias and who has inculcated and who has developed the capability and capacity to patiently tolerate some pain and suffering, without getting emotionally excited and agitated. Pain and suffering are like a bitter medicine which is essential and unavoidable for the cure of the disease.

The sentence "tolerate and withstand pain and suffering" is very significant and it means to tolerate pain and suffering, in one's own self, without any external aid, by just patiently watching and witnessing it, just like a passive and neutral observer, without reacting to it emotionally, and thereby mitigating, postponing and tolerating all the adverse effects of that pain and suffering. As a matter of fact, every person has the capability to neutralise and negate the adverse effects of pain and suffering, of all types and of all magnitudes.

Bhagwan has set some strict rules and regulations to administer all affairs of the world, which are called *'maya'* or divine dynamism or laws of Nature. One of these cardinal laws enshrines that nothing is permanent and hence everything of the material world is subject to change. Thus, if a person is facing pain, suffering and misery, he should inculcate and uphold patience, and his mind should remain peaceful and poised, because *maya* or divine dynamism will not let this mental agony to persist for long. Every person should cultivate this positive philosophy and healthy attitude, to understand his inner self.

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DAY 11

A person with a weak mind will never be able to realize and experience his inner self, his *atma* and its divine bliss, because he has enslaved his mind to false, pseudo material comforts, which are both temporary and transient. He has transformed himself into such a weak minded person that as soon as his material worldly comforts are denied or disturbed, he loses his mental alacrity *(smriti)* as well as his discriminatory faculty *(buddhi)*. He will never make efforts and attempts to introspect and meditate, to seek, search, examine and realize his spiritual self or *atma*, and will die with a yearning and unfulfilled, hungry mind.

During the stressful spell of pains, sufferings and hardships, when a person is able to lead his life in a righteous manner by maintaining his inner patience and tolerance power *(dhairya)*, his mental alacrity *(smriti)*, and his discriminatory faculty *(buddhi)*; when the person does not succumb to rash temperamental excitements, material temptations and impulsive gratifications; when the person is able to control his social conduct and interpersonal commitments in the most laudable manner; when the person is able to bridle, check, control and command the demands of his insatiable desires *(trishna)*; and when he quickly subjugates and when he calmly tolerate the pains, sufferings and hardships generated by the nongratification of such insatiable worldly desires *(trishna)*; when the person is able to watch and witness his pains, sufferings and hardships like a nonreactive uncommitted, passive, neutral observer; then one day, such a person will surely realize and experience *atma (soul)* in the form of his inherent spiritual knowledge *(jnana)* and his inner divine bliss *(ananda)*, which will bless him profusely with maximum, sublime satisfaction during his entire worldly existence.

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DAY 12

The spiritual scholars and saints of yore, always advised that every person should worship *Bhagwan (God)* by practising religious rituals, and dedicatedly reciting incantations or by praying to *Bhagawan* by adopting any means of his own choice, in order to know and experience his *atma* (inner self or soul) to the optimum level. Through prayer and worship, he should develop the capacity and capability to calmly tolerate and withstand all types of pains, sufferings and hardships, taking care that his buddhi does not get weakened. Such awareness and resolve will surely strengthen and fortify his mental courage *(titiksha)*.

There is a famous and popular saying : "As is the mind so will be the body". In other words, the mind controls and regulates the organic functions of the human body, making it all the more desirable to develop *titiksha*. *Bhagwan* Krishna exhorted Arjun, not to pay any heed to his senses and not to be dictated by them. This exhortation implies that a person should develop the capability and capacity to patiently tolerate and boldly withstand all painful stresses and strains of daily life to make his mind strong with the passage of time to bear major stresses as well. When one maintains his mental peace and poise with his intellect *(buddhi)* and his mental alacrity *(smriti)* active and efficient, he will have full knowledge of the stresses and strains which confront him, and as a consequence they will not appear very fearful to his mind. He will be able to control his impulsive tendencies (the root casue of attachment *(raga)* and aversion *(dwesha)* and behave rationally and gently, always protecting his inner conscience *(atma)*. Such a person is called a god fearing, tolerant and kind person, and is sure to realize his inherent soul in the form of divine knowledge and divine bliss *(jnana and ananda)*.

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DAY 13

Spiritual and religious persons always exercise full caution and care in their conduct. Their minds remain fully alert and awake *(smriti)* and they avoid all impulsive and rash tendencies like hostile attitudes (negative and derogatory opinions), baseless apprehensions (doubts and suspicions) and irrational anger (hostile and aggressive emotions), by constantly and continuously examining and analyzing all these instinctive urges to subjugate them. This is how the religious and spiritual persons protect and preserve their mental peace and inner peace *(shanti)* forever, the hallmarks of saints and sages. Gradually they develop their inherent spiritual strength which infuses in them the requisite power to withstand the negative forces and their impulsive pulls and pushes. They develop tolerance towards the malicious and spiteful remarks of other persons, which hurt and injure their prestige, self pride and ego. This is called austerity involving the mind, inner self or inherent spirit.

It is a fact that human beings form a part of a family and they live in a common home. To live and lead a family life and mutually interact was planned by God, right from the creation of the universe. Living in a group leads to formation of attitudes quite often negative and biased in a person's mind against other fellows. This often leads to the formation of hostile feelings for others, and one's mind is preoccupied with them and interferes with his meditation and he does not experience inner peace *(shanti)*. To extricate the mind from such feelings, a person should ruminate, introspect, and make self study and self examination to disengage himself from the external, material world. Under such situation or mental state, recitation of *mantra* or religious prayer is of much help and is in vogue since ages. Both these methods are laudable in achieving concentration of the mind and are recommended by the scriptures.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Confidence in Right Faith (*Shraddha*)

Shraddha is the name of that noble spirit by which the arguments, counter arguments or false arguments do not disturb the mind of a person proceeding on the path of good. In other words, the simple spontaneous spirit that makes a person move on the path of the good with the confidence that this is true is known as confidence in right faith *(shraddha)*. First of all this right faith is placed in God who is the abode of the supreme good because He is the ultimate destination. He is not visible nor can He be proved with arguments or counter arguments. But He appears in meditation only before those persons who have realized this truth by their austerity, renunciation and hard work. One must keep one's mind submitted before God, and be relaxed for inspiration, to move with confidence on the path of good.

This inspiritation does not arise without confidence in right faith. For that end, one must have proper faith in the words of the trustworthy person who reveals that path of God, because a human being can not understand all this with his intellect, without first proceeding on that path. This ultimate supreme state is not something worldly that a man can adopt following the conduct of others when he is confronted with pain. Only the person, who has known the end of this path (of God) through renunciation and austerity and who has experienced this spiritual truth and the supreme state of salvation, the fruit of freedom from all pains while living in this world, has full knowledge of this path of God.

Confidence in right faith is needed only for the ignorant seeker to inspire him to proceed on the path. On reaching the destination the confidence in right faith will turn into perceptible knowledge.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekened) Contd. ....
Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(106)

Passing phenomena don't turn out to constrain,
In oneself and others, but, put up with their strain;
Not to be sensitive as to what others judge,
Let stream of consciousness flow selfless with no grudge.

(107)

Spiritual intelligence could not be developed,
if in some human being, on him to lay no blame;
Least one feels, how pleasures by all ills enveloped,
And fire of chain of pains parting they soon in flame,

(108)

Though not such pains are pain which are to soon depart,
What that, likewise, is joy ever subject to part;
Let them, then, come and go, at will, round after round,
To become and exist one is, to what end bound?

(109)

If hopes, however, as are kept embraced,
Being baffled, one day, sorrows they will bring;
If from heart they are totally effaced,
Of world desolate songs one need not sing.

(110)

If once existent is not fully perished,
So gone destroyed is not all- existent;
In both, consciousness is not abolished,
In and new and new be, mind and tongue silent.

(111)

If short-lived pleasures are not in one's view,
He needs must not stretch his senses and mind;
In pure, perfect state, to keep continue,
By all wits and might sure way is to find.

(112)

Freedom, absolute suits that peace supreme,
Devoid of demands avoids all extreme;
Charmful desires with admired mental states,
Where, harmful appear, clear insight dictates.

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DAY 15

Learned scholars of ancient times have suggested the unfailing method for assured success in spiritual realization. These pious saints recommend that a person should make constant efforts to know and grasp the waves and whirlpools arising in the stream of his consciousness, as well as the undertones and undercurrents agitating and arising in the depths of his mental and spiritual existence. A person should achieve this objective with the help of self examination, self study, introspection and meditation. Through these means, a person can know and understand his turbulent mind to some extent. Concurrently, he should refuse to accept the instigations of his ego and boldly resist all the emotional self-seeking and self-gratifying demands of his ego. The wise seers have openly proclaimed that the person who completely controls and who subjugates his ego, dedicatedly and devotedly; and who accepts, adopts and follows the wise words of his inner conscience *(atma)*, will be enlightened and his path will be guided in this world by those wise words which definitely act as his celestial Guru. There is one aphorism in Sanskrit language when translated it means : "The inner conscience (*atma*) reveals to a human mind certain divine directions. If the person accepts, if he adopts and if he humbly follows those divine directions with complete devotion and dedication and if he leads his life accordingly, only then the person is a true and sincere devotee."

So the real *Guru* is always present in oneself as his inherent and innate divine consciousness. The token word *(mantra)* prescribed by the external *Guru* to be recited with devotion and dedication, is a symbol and represents the real Guru within oneself. However, there is an essential condition of fully knowing and understanding one's mind (with the help of introspection and meditation), if one wants to know, understand and realize his inherent and innate *Guru* — one's divine consciousness. To achieve this objective, one's mind must maintain its inner peace and poise.

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DAY 16

Every person has to perform all the activities concerned with his body, his family, his social obligations including livelihood etc. all by himself. Thus he comes in contact with innumerable persons. In these situations, it is imperative that the person should immediately identify and insulate himself from the virulence of the derogatory and negative emotions of aversion *(dwesha)*, anger *(krodha)* and self pride *(ahankara)*, as soon as they appear and affect his mind. As a matter of fact, when the mind is agitated and angry, the person should avoid or delay action. After remaining calm and quiet for some time, he should speak slowly and politely. This too amounts to devotion and dedication to the ethical and religious way of life. The person must not stop his actions, but must take care that they are rational, judicious, and are performed with utmost devotion and dedication, as if they were pious religious rituals. He should keep his mind active and alert, fully vigilant and cautious, to identify experience and enjoy the celestial peace of his innermost being, his *atma* or soul (which dawns from the successful completion of one's actions). The day he starts accepting and acknowledging his indwelling *atma*, he will get rid of his human weaknesses and vices.

When the indwelling *atma* of a person acquires the status of an objective and impartial witness *(sakshi)*, then such *atma* (soul) will reveal its inherent divine bliss *(ananda)*.Thereafter, the person will never complain that he does not know how to pass his spare time in his old age, because his mind is bereft of worldly interests and engagements. He will not like to seek worldly comforts, and feeling the presence of the divine bliss in himself, he will not be required to go to any public place anymore, in search of happiness. He will also know how his *atma* is organizing and administering the various complex functions of his physical body.

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DAY 17

The inherent spiritual entity or the innate divine power, with which the physical body of all living creatures is alive and active, while keeping itself aloof, uninvolved and unaffected, even when living in the midst of this universe, performs its unique acts and activities through its universal material force, is called *prakriti*. Henceforth, one should focus one's mind and meditate with an absorbed mind about this inherent spiritual entity or this innate divine power, giving up one's insatiable worldly desires *(trishna)*. The fact of the matter is, that the moment a person sits in a lonely place, all alone, to practise meditation, his mind will get overcrowded and deluged with his earlier worldly engagements, enticements and commitments, his attachments *(raga)*, his aversions *(dwesha)*, his suspicions *(sanshay)* his hostility *(vair)* and his unfulfilled and ungratified desires *(trishna)*. It is true as well as justified that person having family and household responsibilities, has more worries to earn enough to meet the family needs and commitments. Though dependent on his capacity and capability, every person should sincerely strive to earn enough to fulfil his family needs and necessities. Thereafter, he should try to live and lead a contented life with whatever he is able to earn. Also, when he is alone, he should start studying and surveying his *atma* and its inalienable relationship with *Paramatma*. But the person must not succumb to the irresistible urge to sleep after getting exhausted with his persistent prayers and continuous worship or when his mind gets tired with his job activities, or when his mind gets exhausted due to excursions, explorations and other merry making activities. When the person boldly, intelligently, judiciously voluntarily, resolutely and with full determination decides practicising meditation in a lonely place to get rid of all his vices and weaknesses, he will surely succeed in his mission.

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DAY 18

Remember that it is best and essential to live and lead a harmonious and healthy social life. This always ensures mental peace and happiness. Never think that interpersonal quarrels and social conflicts can solve the attending problems successfully in one's favour; rather these will aggravate, deteriorate and complicate the situation, because one's adversaries and opponents have the same type of prejudice and ill will as one has.

One's vices and weaknesses cannot be eliminated and subjugated by coercion and subjugation. On the contrary, one may be able to deflate, eliminate and subjugate some of one's vices and weaknesses with the help of dedicated prayers and thorough intelligent and rational behavior. One must not vitiate his mind by cultivating, germinating and generating such vices as anger, self pride, malicious feelings, hostility and hatred; these always lead to conflicts and quarrels, which are hurdles in the path of one's spiritual progress. Just as anger obstructs both worldly and spiritual progress, similarly, lust and attachment obstruct material and spiritual progress.

To keep body and mind in full consonance and harmony with each other, is called Yoga. The term *atmasanyoga* means that the person keeps his mind under his full control, and maintains self-discipline with caution and care, and that the person does not lead his life as a matter of habit, mechanically, under the influence of impulsive temptations and their gratification. Lord Krishna proclaims in the Gita that He always stands by and supports the self-disciplined and rational person in all his actions and in every activity he undertakes. Such a person will always feel and believe that the celestial consciousness which is present within his body in the form of *atma*, is equally present everywhere and is operating and controlling the whole external world.

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DAY 19

To ward off the worrisome and disturbing thoughts from the mind, it is usually recommended that a person should cultivate and practise the principle of non-attachment and non-involvement *(anasakti-yoga)*. *Bhagwan* Krishna has proclaimed in the Gita : One should give up all attachments or in other words, one should become non-attached and non-involved. One should perform all actions without bothering and worrying about the outcome and the results. Remember, whatever is to happen will happen. One should not hold oneself or others responsible for anything. As far as one is concerned one should do one's best under the circumstances. By worrying, one gets upset to the extent that his blood circulation and breathing are disturbed and negatively affect the functioning of all his bodily organs. Further, the responsibilities, which he has accepted, he will not be able to discharge them in the proper manner. But he must keep his behaviour upright. One cannot avoid many things and happenings in this world. One should not bother if he is unable to control them and face and tolerate them with a calm and poised mind. If one develops this attitude then he has successfully learnt to perform all his deeds without bothering about their results. He then knows, how to lead his life, without getting enticed and engulfed in the mundane world. One should continue performing his deeds in this manner, without getting mentally involved and emotionally attached, as well as keep on grasping and understanding the overt and covert mechanisms of his mind.

A person who keeps his mind fully alert and active, he will be able to identify the presence of the vices like attachment *(raga)*, averstion *(dwesha)*, prestige *(mana)* and ignorance (*avidya*), the mother of all vices, which reveal themselves in the human mind. One should also recognise his fetters; viewing *(drishti)*, suspicion *(sanshay)*, attachment *(raga)*, aversion *(dwesha)*, arrogance *(mana)*, delusion *(moha)*, Lust *(kama)*, anger *(krodha)* etc, with a bold mind free of frustration, and then proceed to get rid of them in a gradual, courageous manner.

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DAY 20

It is a universal reality that every person experiences both comforts and discomforts in this world, about which one propounds undue and unnecessary anxieties and apprehensions all the time. One should repeat with devotion and dedication the holy and sacred name of *Bhagwan*, get absorbed in it completely ignoring and forgetting one's mental worries. This type of life is called 'Awakened Existence' *(sakriya jiwan)*, meaning "to make the mind fully conscious *(chetan)*, active and alert and inspire one's mind to adopt the honest, upright and sincere path of life." One must adopt such a life also to become aware of the vices hibernating in his mind. If one does not make sincere efforts to identify his inherent vices, or one does not sit in solitude to introspect and meditate to unravel them, one will never be able to identify them completely. Both concentration of mind and sitting in isolation can be successfully practised when one performs all one's essential daily life duties to fulfil one's bodily needs and necessities with an attentive and alert mind. Then one will know the full functioning of one's mind.

When one's mind acquires the habit of only focussing on the activity in hand, forgetting everything, this is called *karmayoga* (Oneness of mind and action). Training his mind slowly and gradually, a committed, conscientious person can learn and master many other things. Also a person himself can assess and know the extent and the degree to which he has become a slave to his "trishna" or one's insatiable worldly desires. The day a person starts witnessing and watching the universal drama in his own mind, he will at once realise that one and the same supreme divine spirit *(Paramatma)* is omnipresent and all pervasive. The divine spirit revealing itself in every single being is called soul *(atma)*, and collectively, at the universal level is Almighty God *(Paramatma)*, the fountain of limitless bliss.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Emptiness *(Shoonya)*

Shoonya or emptiness means a vacant place. For instance, if a room is filled with a lot of goods, it is called a filled room and if each object is thrown out of it one by one, it will be said to be empty, i.e. nothing is left in it. Similarly, consciousness, or soul or the continuous current of knowledge is ever flowing, in it there occur many whirlpools of wrong views, besides spiritual ignorance, ego, bewilderment, attachments, aversion and many types of actions forced by them. When there is no aforesaid whirlpool i.e. when the soul or consciousness manifested as pure knowledge is empty and experienced as joyful, it is said to be the state of emptiness. This indeed has been called emptiness *(Shoonya)* in the scriptures. It means throwing out the burden of the worldly fetters that burden the soul, through the forces of right knowledge, dispassion, and absorbed meditation leading only to a state of pure knowledge which would be called a state of emptiness. Like in the example of a room, if a person is emptied of spiritual ignorance, that supreme emptiness is a state of salvation. It does not mean lack of awareness or knowledge. For instance, the room is not destroyed when things are thrown out of it. Similarly, the burden of worldly fetters etc. on the consciousness is thrown out by right knowledge and meditation. The consciousness manifested as pure knowledge can not be thrown out, it is rather revealed in a sure and liberated form. Emptiness is mentioned only to throw out that burden on consciousness.

It means that a state of liberation will be experienced when the consciousness is free from all these fetters.

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DAY 22

The sentient world *(chetan jagat)* is blessed with two capabilities (1) the capability of intelligence and intellect *(buddhi and vivek)* and (2) The capability of instincts and urges. Only the human species in the animal kingdom is blessed with intelligence and intellect. However, all sentient beings, both human and animal species manifest various types of feelings and emotions and possess instincts and urges essential for their survival. For example, the emotion of anger is experienced by human beings as well as by animals and birds and irrespective of age and gender. Right from its birth, the child experiences and manifests the emotion of anger, and of pain and pleasure, besides experiencing various types of needs and desires. The child also experiences and manifests its specific ego and identity as well as its self-respect and self-recognition. These emotions and instinctive tendencies, according to their intensity, compel all living beings to get engaged and involved in the external world and motivate the living beings in their specific manner. Like all other animals and birds, if a human being opts and if he continues to lead his life according to the demands of his emotional and instinctual tendencies, the human being would not even dream of ever achieving the supreme goal of spiritual realization. In order to attain spiritual well-being and divine welfare, it is necessary for the human being to cultivate and develop his intellectual capabilities, and not live and lead his life according to the dictates of the impulsive emotional and instinctive tendencies, but instead to maintain and uphold his status of a human being or human status. The phrase 'human status' implies that the intellectual capabilities of the human being are fully active and alert, that his thoughts are both mature and rational, that he is capable of motivating his mind to plan his own well-being and welfare.

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DAY 23

Right from childhood, the human mind gets strongly attached and ensalved to the external world. The persistent push and pull of the external world is so great that the human being gets convinced that his entire welfare and well-being is dependent on the external world. But after getting strongly attached and enslaved to the external world, a time comes when he realises the hollowness or emptiness of it as he finds nothing in the external world except too much stress and pain and suffering, However, if the human being starts living and leading his life according to the wise counsel of his *buddhi* in a rational manner, as per the proclamation of the great saints of yore, a person can definitely relish spiritual bliss. Such a person will quickly know as to what is good or bad for him, and after knowing it, he will choose the course of his life for his own welfare. He will subjugate his anger, give up harmful foods and drinks, develop tolerance towards the derogatory and insulting remarks of his opponents. He will not have ill-will and malice against his adversaries, also control to some extent his urge to sleep and thus lead a disciplined life according to the wise and rational advice of his *buddhi*. Such a man will never slip down from his superior status of a human species, provided he devotedly, dedicatedly, honestly and sincerely observes all social, religious and ethical principles. Making progress in this manner, the person will achieve such a mental state that he will lose unnecessary interest in the persons/products of the external world. Only then the person will experience his latent spiritual powers and divine capabilities, the unique spiritual power (*atma*) residing within the person, which is observing all the actions of the person and administering his bodily functions. The moment the person becomes aware of his *atma*, he will completely become one with *Paramatma* (universal supreme spiritual power).

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DAY 24

The *Garud Purana*, an ancient scripture of Hindu religion, mentions that an invisible angel, called *Chitragupta*, maintains in coded langauge (*sanskaras*) all the actions, reactions and interactions, and transactions of the negative forces, such as the aggressive urges, the irresistible instincts and the assertive habits. He also maintains the record of how these negative forces decided, determined and dominated the external behaviour of that person. These *sanskaras* (indelible impresions) which preserved and protected by *Chitragupta*, the inner invisible angel do persist even after death. The *sanskaras*, the indelible impressions of past lives coupled with the impressions of the present life also decide and determine the future life at the time of rebirth, according to the theory of spiritual transmigration. That is why the saints and sages of yore warned that a person should not indulge in impulsive and irrational activities in his conscious life intentionally in order to protect and preserve his spiritual well-being. Instead, he should cultivate the disciplined and devotional way of life. All great teachers lived their lives in a balanced and rational manner.

A human being must make continuous and constant efforts to live a very intelligent, regulated, rational and disciplined life by subjugating his animal like instinctive urges, vices and weaknesses. A regulated, rational and disciplined life is called an enlightened existence. The word 'Dharma' or religion means a self chosen, self imposed, cherished, devoted and dedicated way of life. A human being should thus cultivate and develop, with conscious and sincere efforts, a religious temperament, spiritual inclination and ethical attitude, to lead an intelligent way of life.

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DAY 25

The all pervading and omnipresent spiritual power, which witnesses all the covert and overt acts of human beings, is called *Parmeshwar* or *Paramatma*. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita that He Himself is the all pervading and omnipresent adjucating spiritual power, universally abiding within all human beings. The person should always consider as to how this inherent spiritual power will judge his actions, as good or bad. As, when the human mind becomes forgetful and starts ignoring and neglecting its own spiritual power, it gets estranged and alienated from its inherent spiritual power, which is the hallmark of the status of human species, so one should be cautious in performing actions. For that end, one should seek help from God through praying. Although nobody has seen or although nobody has met God in person, all religious scriptures refer to a noble person, a Supreme Being, repeatedly referred to as *Avatar Purush* (Manifested God), who actually lived and who led such a pious life as a role model. So one may address one's prayers to Him after focussiong his mind to seek His divine help in moulding his behaviour, to control his vices and weaknesses gradually. This method of recalling and reviewing through his intellect is only available to the human species among all living beings. In essence, one should live intelligently and meticulously meaning that one should critically and rationally think and thereafter one should make correct and appropriate decisions, which should ensure his ultimate spiritual welfare and well-being. When a person adopts this style of life, he will surely be able to preserve and protect his privileged status of a human being and will not be relegated to the less evolved ranks of lower animal species at the time of spiritual transmigration. Depending on his progress, he may even have '*brahmasakshatkar*' i.e. meeting the Lord in person.

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DAY 26

The ultimate spiritual goal of all human beings is to become one with *Parameshwar* (*Bhagwan*), and eternally experience His divine bliss.This fact is also called *Brahmansakshatkar* or meeting in person, the supreme divine being or *Parameshwar*. The word *'Brahman'* means that supreme divine being, who is all-pervading, everywhere and everpresent. *Brahman*, in His micro-form (in the tiny form of divine spark) is present within each individual human being, and *Brahman* in his macro-form, is all pervading everywhere and everpresent, encompassing eternally the whole universe, and collectively represents all the micro-forms of divinity, put together as one, united spiritual entity. In the micro-form, he is called *'jiva'* (*jivatma*), and in the macro form, he is called *Brahman*. When a person experiences the presence of *Brahman* everywhere, in each and every person and product of the universe, in everything that comes in the visual field of the person and when he treats and when he terms everything of the world as manifestation of *Parameshwar*, this is called *Brahman* in his macroform. On the other hand, the same unique *Parameshwar* may manifest Himself in various distinct, different and multiple forms. A person may identify those various distinct, different and multiple forms as his friend or his foe or his son, for the sake of social interaction and fulfil the demands of the mundane world. This is called Brahman in microforms. But finally and ultimately, the person will admit and acknowledge that the same unique *Parameshwar* is abiding within all the individuals, and in his own physical body, whom he had visualised and witnessed in his meditation. If one probes further one can feel the permanent presence of the unique *Parameshwar* in his own person in one's meditation (but only when one has purged all the worldly vices and weaknesses from one's mind, keeping one's inner spiritual insight *(buddhi)*, fully alert and upright).

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DAY 27

When a person recites his prayers with honest and sincere devotion and dedication or when a person prostrates at the lotus feet of *Bhagwan* with saturated feelings and surcharged emotions, with his mind fully focused on *Bhagwan* (God), then one should consider as a sure sign that the person is protecting and he is preserving his superior status of a human being, steadfastly and committedly, because his intelligence and intellectual capabilities are guiding and controlling his social interactions, conduct and behaviour in the external world. Every person must try to maintain at least his privileged, superior human status, by cultivating and imbibing virtues for ethical existence.

On the path, every person should learn and practise the great science of breathing (*pranayama*), that is how to breathe in and breathe out, in a regulated and scientific manner, sitting erect in isolation at a solitary place after dinner. In other words, his mind must remain fully active, alert, consolidated to study each and every aspect of his breathing process, i.e. the *prana-apana* aspects, disengaging and disentangling the mind from all the happenings of the external world. In this way, he attains a calm and peaceful state which induces sleep, which is essential for the restoration and rejuvenation of both his physical and mental health. Next morning, he will wake up with a refreshed, replenished, recharged and fully invigorated mind; he will execute and undertake all his engagements and activities with full commitment, very cautiously and carefully with a new zeal and complete mental concentration. Throughout the day, he will enjoy his interpersonal deliberations and business dealings, behaving in the external world with full religious conviction and social commitment (*shraddha*). By adopting this way of life as a regular daily practice, he will gradually and surely become god-fearing, and religious minded person.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Forgiveness *(Kshama)* and Established Forgiveness *(Kshanti)*

Dispassion is related to a desire for pleasures. It implies to free the mind of those desires, to turn away from them, but forgiveness is related to anger, i.e. when someone's pleasures are disturbed, pain is experienced, anger arises in the mind and the person causing pain appears to be an enemy and a criminal. In such a state calming down whatever provocation there is in the mind to do something against him or harm him and to have no aversion towards that person is called forgiveness. When the thought of his guilt occurs in the mind, and when the mind thinks of doing something, calming down the mind is forgiveness. A person who causes pain seems to be guilty. Forgiveness means resisting that provocation in the mind and not giving much importance to his guilt, being calm in oneself, and not developing a view of an enemy about him. If the mind is calmed through efforts, and if the inclination to do something against him does not persist, it is the manifestation of forgiveness. Without this anger is not calmed and aversion is not eliminated.

Kshanti is the higher stage of *kshama* in which while practising forgiveness the mind becomes so accustomed to enduring the guilt of others that there is no need of conscious thought regarding enduring the pain caused by the guilt of others. He has forgiveness spontaneously established in himself. This is the nature of kshanti — the established forgiveness. In other words, if one regards the faults of others with some mindfulness but without deliberation, if one remains calm while experiencing the pain and if one becomes accustomed to remaining calm, it will be the manifestation of established forgiveness *(kshanti)*. *Kshanti* is the higher stage of *kshama* for which, one greatly needs austerity and endurance. through *kshama* and *shanti*, the mind inclined to the world is calmed and salvation is attained.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend) Contd....

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(113)

Joy, short-lived, though, ever remains in view,
As goes out one, springs in another new;
From sleep or ease as does one arise,
Expects, them soon, rather, enhanced in size.

(114)

What's grand in appearance, looks graceful and pleasant,
Ends in wrong, its contact, and pleasures inconstant;
Ends all in endless impulses to destroy,
With ever growing grief, ever decreasing joy.

(115)

Not true nobles are tied up with conditions of worlds,
Never commit all wrongs, use always useful words;
In acts they ever good, never at heart impure,
Seek delight in themselves, content they pains endure.

(116)

Loose mind turns inwards does past being reflect,
Listens mournful songs of wants to affect;
Then thinks to fulfil 'will' intense and wild,
Musing goes to death for new world of child.

(117)

One who wins over sleep with its enticing charm,
And lives with wants reduced, not mind ruffled to harm;
In meditation deep well absorbed truth detects,
Till sound state endures pains sees no death, no effects.

(118)

In blind substance one sleeps, from it awakes alone,
Remains it during sleep with no will of one's own;
Independent what folds and unfolds too its play,
As by sleep so with death what's different to say.

(119)

In the world, organised, with its wits over-joyed,
Unit, being constituent is belied for alloyed;
Alone remains in sleep, to come from death it likes,
Ever becomes it changed, deciding past not strikes.

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DAY 29

Whatever emotions and sentiments one entertain in one's mind at the time of one's death, accordingly one will be reborn as a living being having those typical mental tendencies. So, at the time of death, one must keep one's mind under one's conscious, intelligent and conscientious control to quit this mundane world with noble, gentle, pure and pious emotions and not to be born in an inferior and less intelligent existence (*durgati*). It is best if one prays to *Bhagwan* with fully committed and sincere dedication at the time of one's death. The term '*Bhagwan*' represents the supreme spiritual entity who has proclaimed Himself as Sachchidanand (sat + chit + ananda), or who personifies in His own person Eternity and All pervasiveness *(sat)*, the supreme and ultimate consciousness *(chit)* and everlasting and everincreasing spiritual bliss *(ananda)*.

One should admit and acknowledge before *Bhagwan* one's ignorance and limited knowledge, immaturity of mind to grasp the divine qualities of God. Hence one should always submit, surrender and prostrate oneself at the lotus feet of *Bhagwan* (God), with utmost dedication and devotion. For this one should devote adequate time in repetitive recitation of *Bhagwan*'s sacred name. If this too is not possible, then one should join and participate in the group and collective devotional singing and dancing *(kirtan)*. One should regularly perform some prayer in order to lead his life religiously, devotionally, ethically and intelligently, in a disciplined manner in the external world, instead of living like animals and birds, on impulses and instincts. For all this, one must have abiding and full faith in the rules and regulations mentioned in the religious scriptures. Thus one should adopt the life style which involves overt, open and apparent worship of the Almighty to ensure one's human status at the time of spiritiual transmigration.

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DAY 30

To achieve a serene and sweet life a person should lead a disciplined life. He must eschew and avoid the serious evils and vices like stealing, cheating, telling lies, malicious intention, misbehaviour, addictions and intoxication, use of foul and ferocious words etc. Further, he should carefully assess his food intake lest it produces laziness and lethargy making it difficult to practise meditation and introspection. He must also take stock of his mind's mechanism to discipline it. In this manner, he gradually attains complete inner peace and poise, and leads his life under the directions of his inherent intelligence and intellectual rational capabilities. All this presupposes that the seeker is prepared to willingly tolerate the pain and sufferings caused by renouncing his futile needs and necessities, to observe austerity (*tapasya*), contentment (*santosh*), mercy and forgiveness, to name a few of the noble qualities. He should make constant and persistent efforts to merge the small spark of his personal spiritual consciousness (*atma*) with the flagrant fire of the universal spiritual consciousness (*Paramatma*). As a result his mind will experience a mysterious spiritual enlightenment and feel completely engulfed by the blinding sublime light of divine knowledge. The moment his mind starts enjoying the inner spiritual bliss, it will get entirely absorbed in itself (meditation), and in that state of absorbed meditation *(samadhi)*, he will be rewarded with the inner divine knowledge (*atmajnana*). Once one achieves and experiences this blissful state (spiritual bliss) then take it for granted that one has selected the right path of his spiritual welfare, which will surely lead to the realization of his most cherished goal i..e spiritual salvation or *moksha*, or meeting in person Sachchidanand Prabhu (God who is personified *sat+chit+ananda*).

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DAY 31

The indwelling spiritual power within one's body, one's *atma* or soul—which is part and parcel of *Paramatma*, the supreme spiritual power infuses life in the physical body and keeps it fully alert and active. It is constantly and consistently present in all types of living beings of the universe. Every person should make sincere and dedicated efforts to know and realize the omniscient, omnipotent, all-pervasive, universal and eternal *Paramatma*, who possesses the unique spiritual powers, i.e. cognition (*jnanashakti*, or knowing and comprehending powers), and conation (*kriya shakti* or execution and implementing powers).Cognition powers imply that *Paramatma* has the unique power of knowing each and everything of the universe, wherever and whenever it may happen. *Paramatma*, in the form of spiritual consciousness is present in the phyiscal body of every living being. He also possesses three cardinal features: *sat* (eternal), *chit* (fully alert and active), and *anand* (unending spiritual bliss).When a person starts worshipping *Paramatma* with dedication and devotion, he is blessed with the unique spiritual bliss, everlasting and ever-increasing, without the help of any external aid or material element of the mundane world. The acquisition of knowledge of *Paramatma* is a pre-requisite for attaining spiritual salvation (*moksha*).

Spiritual salvation does not demand that the person has to completely give up all interactions with the external world and disengage and disentangle himself from his worldly commitments, professional engagements and social responsibilities. It simply implies that the person has to avoid and give up all his unnecessary and excessive emotional attachments, which entangle and enslave him to the external, material world.

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NOVEMBER

Choiceless Awareness

Steady body posture, mindful breathing, *mantra japa*, ethical living, solitude and introspection when practised over a long period of time with regularity and earnestness will benefit us tremendously on the path of meditation. As we sit for meditation we go more and more inwards and begin to understand life, ourselves and others with greater clarity. We realize that life is a drama being played on the stage of the world. Everyone, including ourselves, is playing his or her role according to their personalities which is a product of their psychic impressions *(vasanas and sanskars)*. Everyone acts, speaks or thinks in a certain way because he is under the grip of divine dynamism *(maya)*. One learns not to react or form prejudiced views or blame or criticize, but to simply watch the world drama as it unfurls. We become aware of everything that is going on around us, but we choose not to react, as we realize that it is futile to do so. This is choiceless awareness. This is not a weak or passive attitude; on the other hand, it is an extremely powerful tool for developing tolerance, fortitude, compassion and above all, acceptance. We learn to accept everything and everyone including ourselves in a detached manner without clouding or complicating the mind.

Editor

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Day 1



NOVEMBER

The term *Brahman* represents the creative powers at the universal, collective level, whereas the term *Prajapati (life god)* represents the same creative powers at the specific personal level. The deity *Prajapati* inhabits the physical body of all the human beings right from the time of conception (birth). Ancient Vedic spiritual literature gives *Brahman* the status of God (*Paramatma*). *Brahman* is universally and uniformly present within each and every living being and watching and witnessing all the time, all their actions. A person who is afraid of the all-pervading and omnipresent *Brahman*, develops a judicious insight and sincerely avoids indulging in evil and ignoble actions, and thereby, his mind always remains pious, pure and free from the burdens of sins, guilt and self condemnation. Further, if the person harbours in his mind noble, gentle, and sublime feelings during his life time, then he can even acquire the very superior spiritual status of a deity (*devta*) at the time of rebirth.

The *elan vital* or life instinct has no specific form or features. Its specific form or features are decided and determined by the accumulated indelible impressions *(sanskaras)*, which the person has collected through his actions during the past and previous lives. The *sanskaras* do affect one's present mental capabilities and also determine the type of life in next life after death. When a person leads his life intelligently, rationally, carefully and cautiously, he will definitely be born as a human being (*Homo sapiens*) among the 84 lakhs of species of living beings. In short, the next birth of a person is decided and determined by the type and intensity of emotions and urges he experiences at the time of his death, as well as by the accumulated *sanskaras* of the person.

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DAY 2

The deity *Prajapati* is protecting and preserving the life of all the living beings in this universe. But when the living beings start leading life according to the directions of the deity *Prajapati*, they will start fighting and quarrelling with one another. *Prajapati* motivates all living beings to become selfish by nature and hence they always protect their selfish interests and achieve their personal goals. They start guarding and circumscribe their existence. He controls the actions of individuals while *Brahman* is all-pervasive and omnipresent throughout the universe. Thus *Brahman* is also dwelling in each and every person.

One must understand the machinations of *Prajapati* and subjugate their volatile waves and forces as well as live and lead one's life in the socially approved manner. One should harbour in one's mind feelings of understanding, accommodation, mercy and goodwill for others and should not perform any untoward and undesirable action under the influence of the intimidating forces of the deity *Prajapati*. The person who leads his life in an ethical manner, carefully, cautiously and judiciously, with an active and alert mind will surely achieve the knowledge of *Brahman* (*brahmjnana*) or God realization and attain self-realization (*atmajnana*). He will also learn about other spiritual deities which are dwelling within his person as well as many inner, inherent spiritual truths. But the main gain of such a meditative and introspective way of life is that the person will learn how to keep his mind happily engaged in his loneliness and fully enjoy his blissful solitude without feeling bored or fatigued. Such inner spiritual bliss is both everlasting and ever increasing.

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DAY 3

There are many things which a person should try to know, recognise and understand, such as what power makes his body active, alert and full of life and to what ultimate destination it is leading the body, also why a person gets dejected, and frustrated when he does not get his cherished objects and ends up in pain and suffering. The person should try to know what his inner self or soul is. Through devoted, dedicated and pointed efforts, in course of time, he will realize and experience his inner divine truths and spiritual realities, then he will no more need the help of other person of the external world to gain more spiritual knowledge.

A person whose mind is not engaged and occupied with some worthwhile activity, his mind will start remembering and recalling his past deeds which are stored in his mind in the form of '*sanskaras*' (indelible impressions), and his mind will endlessly ruminate over them to no benefit. This is specially true of old people, who were quite active for a long time, but owing to age, whose debilitated bodies are incapable of active social interaction, making useful contribution to their family and society and are thus deprived of the resultant mental satisfaction. For them, there is no other shelter except learning and experiencing his own inherent and indwelling divine spirit, *antaratma*. This will be in synchrony with the recommendations of all learned saints and sages of yore, that one should never let one's mind remain idle, disengaged and empty and indulge in self condemnation. Instead he should boldly face the stresses and strains of loneliness. In other words, when one has no social company, one should use this golden opportunity to devotedly recite the blessed and sacred name of God, overcome the urge to sleep (sloth), introspect one's actions. All this constitute subjective education for the cultivation and development of divine knowledge of one's inner self and one will quickly become an expert in introspection and meditation.

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DAY 4

Normally, every person develops a negative image and a hostile attitude against his opponent who has used evil and insulting words against that person. However, learned sages and saints admonish that instead of developing this negative image and hostile attitude against his opponent, the person should adopt either of these two options : (1) he should start pondering about God and His *maya (divine dynamism)* which has forced his opponent to indulge in that ignoble manner, or (2) he should regard his opponent as an innocent idiot who does not understand the subtlities of sweet social interaction. Perhaps the mind of the opponent was under the strong spell of the powerful *Prajapati* who vitiated his mind through generation of 'I'-ness or ego in him.Under such circumstances, it would be best to ignore those evil and insulting words and without any ill will and retaliation, the person should behave in a cordial, healthy and respectful manner, as well as he should sincrely pray to God to grant his opponent a judicious mind so that the opponent may lead his life carefully, cautiously, in an upright and ethical manner.

When one leads his life with a careful, cautious and judicious mind, one will witness the whole world as if one is witnessing a drama. One will at once recognize, how the indwelling deity *Prajapati* (life-god) manipulates and misleads the person, and how the deity generates in the person the various emotions like attachment and aversion, and how these various emotions prove harmful and horrible for the person. Under such conditions with a bold mind, one should try not to utter such words which may incite, infuriate and insult other persons, even when one feels provoked and perturbed. When one leads his life in this manner, his mind will remain contented.

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DAY 5

A person should continually make efforts to recognize all those inner urges and impulses which compel and motivate him to seek human company to experience mutual happiness in the external mundane world. During his lonely hours, he should introspect and identify them and grasp their role and import, and strive to resist their gratification as also to completely eliminate them. If one is successful in his mission, then one will not seek social company to keep one's mind engaged in order to pass one's time during old age.

When a person overcomes and vanquishes his inner urges and impulses, then he need not fight and resist any forces of the external, mundane world, and the whole extravaganza of the external world will appear like a source of entertainment to him. Such a person, will not have any enemy and hence, he will lead his life very happily and peacefully in the external world. Nor will he worry about his spiritual salvation from this mundane world. He will not be afraid of death, as he is not emotionally entangled and involved in the persons and products of the mundane world. By overcoming and vanquishing inner urges and impulses, he has already acquired the higher status of a celestial being (*devta*), and is entitled for admission into the most cherished celestial abode (*Vaikunth*) of God. A spiritually- liberated soul (person) remains intoxicated with spiritual bliss, enjoying the worldly extravaganza as a mere drama, as a mere spectator. Also, only such contented people can easily grasp the dynamics and machinations of indwelling deity called *Prajapati*, responsible for generating ego, anger attachment, aversion etc. and are not affected by them, as they have eliminated worldly temptations, inner impulses, vices and their negative ramifications.The physical body of such a seeker (devotee) is not less than a temple—abode of God.

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DAY 6

When a person is sitting all alone, he should not keep his mind vacant and disengaged. At that time, he should recall those incidents and actions in which he recklessly indulged in evil and impolite language or in which his mind nurtured unnecessary and irresistible desires or in which he misbehaved with others. When his mind starts feeling restless and disturbed by emotions aroused by those past ignoble incidents and activities, he should breathe very deeply, carefully and cautiously. Simultaneously, he should try to restrict, restrain and relegate his aroused emotions. His mind should be fully aware as to how he is breathing in and breating out. As soon as he is able to restrict, restrain and relegate those aroused emotions, he will start breathing normally, peacefully and rhythmically, just like the peaceful breathing process of an innocent child. In addition to breathing, these emotions and passions will also affect his nutrition, thereby strongly affecting his growth, development and health. That is why, when he eats food in a jolly company, with a happy mind, as well as when his breathing is optimal, normal and peaceful, then every part of his physical body will grow and develop to its maximum level. The ancient sages and spiritual scholars have declared that the physical body becomes a replica of the sacred temple of God, when a person takes his food in the above said manner. With a healthy physical body, one should start one's inward pilgrimage to find and realize one's indwelling supreme power (God). There is no need and necessity to make any other, specific and extra efforts to realize this cherished goal (God-realization). But one will have to pursue noble and ethical actions *(karmayoga)* with utmost devotion and dedication, with full faith in all-pervasive, universal and omnipresent God, to acquire complete divine knowledge, to usher into everlasting spring season (*Aathon Pehar Vasant*), or into the everlasting Festival of Lights (*Sada Diwali Sadh Ki*).

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Renunciation *(Tyaga)*

Tyaga or renunciation means not accepting the pleasures of nature, i.e. renouncing the path of nature that runs the world and that drives a person in the world by showing its pleasures and pains. Giving up the pleasures as far as possible, pleasures like taking excessive food and drink, sleeping, and excessive association with worldly objects and persons, pleasures which are opposed to the realization of life in the soul and at last of steadfastness in the soul. Giving up all these pleasures is called renunciation.

This renunciation enhances the power of contemplation and distinctive knowledge *(viveka)* and through it the triviality of worldly pleasures and their material sources is also manifested. As the renunciation grows, it will provide sufficient time to a spiritual striver for sitting in meditation. Then as the worry about protecting the objects that are regarded as one's own or that are his external possessions disturbs the joy of meditation, the meditator will develop the courage to renounce them. When he realizes that these external pleasures end in pain and that there is no purpose of retaining his possessions, he will easily renounce them. Thus on handing over wealth and property to a deserving person, the meditator's meditation will be further enhanced. All this is outer renunciation. Thus when the mind through relation with these objects releases its fetters, it would develop the power even to renounce them. The person will then attain complete salvation by renouncing attachment, aversion, doubt etc., and bewilderment due to worldly pleasures and ego etc. All this is the result of renunciation.

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DAY 8

The real and fundamental purpose of participation in the spiritual discourses of saintly and learned persons is to learn as to how an individual may always enjoy his cherished worldly, physical, material comforts and how he may pass his entire life very happily and contentedly, as well as how he may not be attacked by any mental and psychological ills and anxieties. During one's life, right from one's birth one passes through various stages, i.e. infancy, childhood, adolescence, youthful adulthood and finally one's oldage. One's life-style perforce goes on changing with physical growth and mental development. All these various stages of life never last forever. During his life journey, a person interacts with the persons he comes in touch, goes on developing his ego to a certain age and extent, receives identity, receives comforts, love and attention in varying degrees. Ultimately, he reaches into old age, when all the comforts and joys of childhood, adolescence and youthful adulthood completely dissolve and disappear.

In order to experience happiness and contentment during old age, the ancient sages and saints conducted experiences on the inner spiritual life, and concluded that spiritual way of life is the only safe and secure haven in old age. *Dharma* means to lead a life in a self chosen manner. Thus if a person starts leading his life according to rules and rituals of his adopted religion, then his mind will feel very happy and contented, a new type of experience that he never had before. Once a person tastes the happiness engendered by loneliness and solitude, he will never seek or prefer the happiness provided by the company of relatives and friends in the mundane world. After recognising and then eliminating his innate urges, impulses and instincts, he develops such insight and knowledge that his mind will not feel interested to develop any interaction with the persons and products of the world.

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DAY 9

When the happiness and contentment of a person is conditioned by the happiness of his small family, this is called circumscribed, small and limited happiness, and this contentment is always temporary and transitory. Instead a person should seek, experience and enjoy everlasting and eternal happiness and contentment, for which there are four paths. One path is to experience and share the happiness and contentment of other persons, or to feel happy when the other person is happy. For this one must develop altruistic emotions, love, kindness and compassion as widespread as the bright and warm rays of the sun.

No doubt, a person remains happy and contented in his limited and circumscribed life of his own family and children, as long as they accord him love, respect and affection and as long as they are dependent on him, and as long as they pamper his ego with praise and adulation. His mind is enslaved to all these factors so much so that he prays to God to protect his happy life forever, as he feels that there is nothing better than the happiness provided by his family and children. When the children grow up, become a little or fully mature and independent, they start thinking and planning their life in their own specific manner, nor are they afraid of their elders and seniors. During old age, when a person gets ignored and neglected by his children, family and friends and his cherished desires remaining unfullfiled, he cannot live and lead his life with happiness and contentment, because he feels deprived of his earlier recognition and respect. At this juncture, every person should judiciously and rationally think that none from the family, children and friends are responsible for ignoring and avoiding the old person. The main factor is the old age and the resultant physical weakness which prevents him to serve others to gain respect from them.

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DAY 10

Old age is the stage of helpless and forced stage of dependence. The old person has learnt neither the methods to maintain his independence nor the ways to lead his life all alone in solitude. For that reason the old person feels all the more ignored and neglected because he indulgently looks towards his family and friends to grant him due attention and affection. It is a sure sign that the mind of the old person is becoming lazy and lethargic as well as it is straying away from the spiritual path. Instead of suffering mental agony or criticizing others, the old person should prepare and train his mind to keenly search and intensively study very objectively, rationally and scientifically, his inner spiritual realities with the help of self analysis, introspection and meditation. All the while he should remember that no one is responsible for his mental torture except his old age, and should pacify his agitated mind.

When a person is intensely attached only with his small and circumscribed circle of family and limited friends, and when he has no concern for the rest of God's creation (*vyapak sansar)* which is as widespread as the rays of the sun, then such a person is living and leading his life in spiritual darkness, known as '*dakshinayana marg*' or descending direction by saints and sages of yore. On the other hand, when a person develops equal and unbiased attachment for all the God's creation, which is as widespread as the rays of the sun, such a person is living and leading his life in spiritual radiance, called '*uttarayana marg*' or ascending direction by ancient saints and sages. Such a person loves and respects the entire creation of God, without any selfish attitude of me-and-mine (small and circumscribed family), without worrying about the previous love and respect he got from his family. To find happiness and peace one should thus take the *uttarayana marg*.

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DAY 11

When a person feels happy and contented to see the welfare of all the living beings in the universe, just like the rays of the sun which fall on the entire cosmos, he enjoys the state of mind referred to by the spiritual philosophers as '*Brahmaloka*'. So one should try to develop a universal altruistic attitude, abandoning selfishness, frustration, anger, ill will, hostility, short-temperedness, ultra-sensitiveness, intolerance and hypercritical attitude, to lead a happy and contented life. This significant phrase means that the person remains jovial and satisfied even during stressful situations (such as old age) and that he keeps his mind engaged in dedicatedly remembering and devotedly reciting the divine and holy name of *Bhagwan Sachidanand*, who is abiding in every person in the form of eternal knowledge and divine bliss. The person should keep alerting and reminding his mind in loud and forceful words, to adopt an ethical, religious and spiritual path, implying that the person should feel equally happy to see the other person happy and prosperous, to shower love and care when the other person is in distress, and to appreciate and applaud even the minor merits and achievements of the other person.

All the emotions and attitudes (both positive and negative) are the products of a human mind. As a matter of fact, it is not sufficient to recognize and acknowledge the presence of emotions like lust, anger, attachment, antagonism, prestige etc. in the mind, unless one tries to abolish and to eliminate them from his mind. Every person must sincerely try to recognize, accept and acknowledge the presence of the various hostile emotions and antagonistic attitudes in his own mind. One's mind should always subjugate one's emotions, to discover one's soul (*atma*) which is *Sat-chit-anand* (*Paramatma*), the boundless and the beautiful.

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DAY 12

Emotions, impulses and instincts are typical features of *Prajapati (elan vital)*, who commands and who controls all the other animal species because they are not blessed with superior intelligence and higher intellect. Emotions, impulses and instinct are not the typical features of human species, nor do they represent and reflect the true self or divine soul which is permanently present within one's physical body in the form of pure consciousness, like a radiant flame. Divine soul does not sleep when the physical body sleeps, and continues managing and controlling all the biological and biochemical functions of the sleeping living being. Divine soul which is present in one's physical body in the form of awareness or consciousness, manifests, itself in the form of satisfaction, contentment, happiness and peace. The vital fact to be remembered is that *Paramatma* (supreme soul) is managing and administering the whole universe. If one imbibes and inculcates such positive thoughts in one's mind, then he will not regard any person as one's enemy or opponent, whether that person is one's child or a relative or a stranger. The only thing required is that one has to subjugate and eliminate with caution and care all one's hostile, negative and antagonistic emotions, impulses and instincts in a socially desirable manner. Further, all emotions and impulsive reactions should be expressed only at the proper time, place and in a proper situation. If and when one starts objectively analyzing and rationally understanding, in detail, all one's emotions and impulses, during his lonely moments in solitude, it means that one has gained and that one has garnered insight into his emotional and impulsive reactions, and one's divine soul (*atma*) has become very active and alert.

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DAY 13

There will never be a moment when the mind of the intelligent, rational and introverted person does not remain active and alert in analyzing and unravelling the implications of his emotional, impulsive and instinctive reactions. *Bhagwan* Krishna has mentioned in the Gita: "You should control and give up all your emotional, impulsive and instinctual tendencies and take shelter only in Me, i.e. *Bhagwan*,." What is implied in the expression "take shelter only in Me, i.e. *Bhagwan*?". *Bhagwan* means Sachidanand, supreme soul (*Paramatma*) who is omnipresent (all-pervasive) and omniscient (All-knowing) and has complete knowledge and full insight in everything and in every situation. One's divine soul always remains unaffected, uninvolved and untarnished by one's emotional, impulsive and instinctive tendencies as well as one's enticements and entanglements in the persons and products of the external, mundane world. One's *atma* (divine soul) is an inseparable part of *Paramatma* (supreme divine soul). One should seek shelter at the lotus feet of *Paramatma*. In other words, one should focus one's mind only on *Paramatma*, instead of worldly temptations. One should disengage and disentangle one's mind from aggressive, hostile and negative emotions, which are temporary and transient and their intensity always alters with the passage of time. When one's mind constantly imbibes and when it inculcates noble and sublime emotions, then take it for granted that he has successfully learnt to lead one's life in an ethical and religious manner even during one's lonely moments in solitude. One's mind will always remain engaged and occupied with noble and spiritual thoughts.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend)

Contentment (*Santosh*)

When the powers that run the world impel a person increasingly towards some pleasure by showing its temptation and when they impel him to acquire that pleasure of nature by disregarding rules, this impulse is regarded as greed. Because of this greed, a person enjoying these worldly pleasures to the maximum soon moves forward toward his own destruction. Turning away the mind, and associating with worldly objects and persons as a rule only to meet the barely necessary requirements and renouncing the rest as greed and calming down the mind with that limited measure is contentment. Without this contentment, a person cannot be established in his seat of meditation, resisting this greed is austerity, and giving up greed and pleasures is renunciation. Similarly, by believing through contemplation that these pleasures of greed are painful and turning away the mind from insatiable passion for them by awakening right knowledge is indeed called dispassion. All these qualities are meant to destroy the fetters of nature or the fetters that run the world, and hence one should develop them in one's pursuit of self realization.

The human mind cannot remain empty. Therefore, a person must awaken his intellect, sit in meditation to awaken his right knowledge, overcome his sleep, and to realize the spiritual truth he must sit in meditation to turn away from worldly pleasures. He must analyse the truth of life through meditation, develop in his mind a spirit to attain liberation from pains, restrain his sense organs and his body, renounce sins and spend most of his time in solitude. These will weaken his fetters of the world which bind him and he will obtain steadfastness of the soul, badly needed in old age and at the time of death. A person who has, thus, sought refuge in right faith spends his time in developing noble qualities in himself and enduring in solitude the pain of departure of all his previous pleasures, and learning from them, he will attain a spiritual life or life in the soul.

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DAY 14 (2nd Weekend) Contd..

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(120)

If some one laughs at you on your invisible gains,
Himself immersed in joy, seeing your efforts and pains;
Don't view his expressions set at defiance joke,
Simple consciousness, then with faith in him invoke.

(121)

In dual material joy man of weak intellect,
Goes deep setting at naught right rules and acts' effects;
Enticed does not dispose right true life to conform,
Exposed to drawbacks all knows too late to reform,

(122)

By contact obtained all good ends in pains;
Prove this truth at heart if reason sustains;
Even sensible thinkers feel repulse,
Being carried away by force of impulse.

(123)

Constant observation makes all fetters well-known,
Gone deep analysis weakens their strength full-grown;
Long purity's practice reduces further size,
Witnessing their absence comes off as final prize.

(124)

Do transcend ignorance practising empty stay,
Mindful enduring pains in needful worldly play;
Keeping from dual venom in rightly thinking trained,
Winning over too sleep with reason well restrained.

(125)

With love of solitude lives, but not doing sins,
Possessed of all virtues insight and truth who wins;
Bears up with all world's wrongs in wise thinking well trained,
Serene even in pains is gone blessed not constrained.

(126)

Receives all my pleasure who are comforted well,
Proper praise goes to them with good and fine who dwell;
Becomes mere compassion for men, in pains who stay,
But who play foul, for them, I think nothing to say.

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DAY 15

When one gives up egoistic attitude, and when one develops an altruistic attitude, in other words when one gives up the small and circumscribed existence of me-and-mine and adopts the wider and all inclusive universal concern and care for all the living beings of creation, in spiritual parlance it is called giving-up the *dakshinayan marg* (descending-way) and adoption of *uttarayan marg* (ascending way). According to Hindu mythology, *'Uttari Dhruva'* (North Star) denotes the spiritual sphere where celestial beings (*devtas*) live. Further, *'Uttari Dhruva'* is also known as 'North Star', which never changes its place and position in the galaxy of stars, and hence it acts as a compass for navigation. "From *dakshinayan marg* to *uttarayan marg*" denotes the spiritual evolution of a human man. It is all right to live a restricted and circumscribed family life as long as one remains responsible for the welfare and well being of one's family and children. But when the children grow up and when they mature into adults, and when they need neither one's support nor one's supervision, then one should oneself step out of the restricted and circumscribed life of one's small family and children and take to bigger and wider life by accepting higher responsibilities for the welfare and well being of all the living beings of the universe. At that point one should constantly and fervently pray to God, for disentangling one's mind from one's family and bless one to sincerely serve all His creation, through developing positive emotions of affection and friendship. One's mind will gradually experience unique happiness during meditation. Such mental state of a person is a strong indication of spiritual awakening. But all the while, one should be aware not to be carried away by one's negative and hostile emotional reactions, which have been generated by deity *Prajapati* (life-god). Achieving inner happiness and mental peace should become the goal of one's life.

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DAY 16

When a person gives up his selfish, personal interests, and the welfare of his circumscribed and small family, when he starts thinking about the uplift and prosperity of all the living beings of this vast world at the universal level, when he willingly and voluntarily starts sharing the joys and sorrows of all the human beings, just as he used to share the joys and sorrows of his own children and family members, the person is said to have adopted the *'uttarayan marg'*. Such a person is said to have developed a catholic, liberal and humane mental horizon. It is a common belief that when a person dies while devotedly and dedicatedly pursuing the *'uttarayan marg'*, he gets an easy entry into the most cherished spiritual sphere called *'Brahmaloka'*.

When a person realizes that he has reached the final stage of ripe old age and that the stages of his innocent childhood and youthful adulthood have already gone by and passed away, he should understand that it is the best and the most appropriate time to pursue with full devotion and dedication, the spiritual and ethical path for attaining the most cherished goal of spiritual salvation (*moksha*). It implies that the person should persistently and dedicatedly develop affectionate and filial sentiments, such as *Maitri* (friendly kindness), *Karuna* (sympathy and compassion), *Mudita* (praise-worthy attitude towards good qualities of others) and *Upeksha* (showing ignorance towards the bad qualities of others), towards all the living beings of the world. Such a person will get an easy access not only to the spiritual sphere of *Brahmaloka*, but he will be cordially welcomed into the highest spiritual sphere of *Vaikuntha* as well, where divine bliss is eternal, constant, and without any alteration or any ebb and tide.

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DAY 17

When a person starts admiring, appreciating and adoring all the creations of God, naturally and automatically he experiences a unique inner happiness. He develops an attitude of admiration, gratitude and thankfulness to Almighty God for all His endless blessings and limitless bounties, which meets all his essential needs, all the time, and that too gratis, both during his present life as well as during his next life. A person with such a frame of mind, will always remain surcharged with inner divine bliss. The last and ultimate goal of his efforts should be to give up all his selfish and egoistic tendencies and cultivate and develop altruistic attitudes. One should make sincere and sustained efforts to feel happy and contented in the well-being, prosperity and happiness of all the living beings of the universe; to emphatically feel and share the sufferings of the afflicted and the deprived humanity at large, to recognize, appreciate and applaud the merits of other persons and intentionally overlook their demerits and defaults; to wilfully ignore and not to harbour in one's mind the insults and abuses hurled against him by one's adversaries and instead, to develop the capacity and power to tolerate and forgive them, without any ill will and malice towards them. This is called '*sheel*' in *Sanskrit* language. Another important virtue which makes a person altruistic, is called '*dana*' in *Sanskrit* language. The term '*dana*' means to donate. Donation can be given in cash, kind (material things) and as voluntary, free service. But in philosophical, religious and spiritual terms, a person should donate his ego or self pride which implies "to subjugate, surrender and sacrifice" his ego or self pride which he proudly exhibits openly in the outside world. One should never be bragging and boastful about one's person and possessions, because even one's own life is short and temporary, and instead take refuge in the eternal *Paramatma* or God.

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DAY 18

When a person analyses and asseses his thoughts and mental processes in an objective, rational and logical manner, and arrives at certain valid and meaningful conclusions, such a method is called introspection and meditation (*dhyana*). *Bhagwan* Krishna has highlighted and recommended the method of introspection and meditation in the following words: '*dhyana visheshyatey*', which means dhyana is significant and important. In short, introspection and meditation is a better technique of praying and worshiping as compared to mechanical vocal repetition and recitation of certain religious *mantras* (aphorisms) or holy names of God. The term '*dhyana*' means doing each action with caution and care, with fully attentive and concentrated mind. It implies that one should know the real meanings and actual importance of objects and ideas with the help of one's inherent intelligence and intellectual capabilities.

A person should guide and direct his mind to understand the fact that no person can remain his companion for ever. Under such circumstances, one should remember the aphorism of Sanskrit language, *"Dhyanat Karma-phal Tyagah"*, which means "It is much better to renounce the results and rewards of all one's deeds." In other words, it is very good to practise *Dhyana* (to develop the habit of introspection and meditation), but to develop the habit of renunciation is much better, ideal and superior. That is to say, to renounce and willingly give up the desire to enjoy the results and rewards of the deeds is not less than a sacrifice. One can, however, cultivate and develop the habit of renunciation (*tyaga*), only when one actually and fully comprehends the inherent and eternal reality of the mundane world with the help of *dhyana* (or introspection and meditation). Through *dhyana*, and *tyaga*, one is able to develop an altruistic and liberal attitude, one shines like the magnanimous Sun-god (*Surya*) to light and warm the entire universe.

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DAY 19

The main purpose and goal of all and every spiritual discourse is two-fold : (i) to explain and expound as to what constitutes the religious and spiritual life; (ii) and to show after understanding the true and inherent meanings, how one should lead one's life accordingly. Right from birth to his death, a person's needs are met by the persons and products of the external world, in varying degrees, and with the passage of time, the person becomes addicted to and dependent on the persons and products of the mundane world to gratify his needs for the worldly happiness. Death denotes the end or denial of the worldly happiness and hence he becomes afraid of death and mortality. As a matter of fact, an individual gets his identity, his personality, his ego or I-ness from childhood. When a person develops the habit to sit all alone, in solitude, without the persons and products of the mundane world, metaphorically it is equivalent to a deathlike situation, because there is no person to assign him an identity, a personality, an ego or I-ness. It is said that only in such a situation, the person comes to know and identify his real inner self. Spiritual philosophers and learned saints proclaim that such a person can realize his real self during his present life span, by self imposed segregation and separation from the mundane world, which is as good as social death, and hence he does not have any fear of death or mortality. Such a person will experience and enjoy inner happiness (spiritual bliss) when sitting all alone, in solitude during his meditation.

As a matter of fact, the ultimate aim of a spiritual discourse or of reading holy books is to reveal and preach the spiritual and religious realities to mankind in general in their typical manner and richly devotional language.

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DAY 20

For experiencing boundless inner happiness or spiritual bliss, it is imperative to understand how a person cultivates the habit to sit all alone in solitude. When an infant of any living species is born he comes with certain typical instincts and emotions and some basic rudimentary intelligence. He gradually becomes aware of air, water, the vast sky, moving objects and living beings who generate in the infant various types of feelings, such as fear, suspicion etc. He also develops certain desires, and when these desires are not satisfied, he gets angry as well as indicates aversion. As a result, he develops certain actions and reactions. However, a time comes when these mundane objects and events which earlier used to provide the person happiness and satisfaction fail to give him pleasure any more. Gradually the child becomes a youth and then a responsible adult and begins to enjoy abundant respect and recognition. However, this acquired respect and recognition starts vanishing and slipping when he attains old age and senility. Under such conditions, the old person should make dedicated efforts to recognize and understand his inner spiritual realities, by living in a disciplined manner, wisely and intelligently, according to ethical and religious rules. When the old person adopts this style of life, automatically all his worldly problems vanish, and he discovers a unique and marvellous inner spiritual life. He will realise his inner spiritual self (*atma*) which is constantly present within his body in the form of indwelling soul. *Atma* (the specific spiritual reality) is an inalienable part of *Paramatma* (the supreme spiritual reality) which is eternal and all-pervasive. If and when the old person intimately comprehends that supreme spiritual reality *(Paramatma)*, he will automatically be blessed with inner spiritual bliss.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Duality *(Dwaita)*

Belief in two is called duality. It means to distinguish between one object and the other, one person and the other, to think that one is different from the other. For instance, if pain is caused to a person by someone else, then he thinks the other to be pain giving and regards himself as the victim of pain. Thus a distinction has been made that one is pain giving and the other is the victim of pain. Similarly there is another kind of duality. for instance, when pain is caused to a person, he regards the other as pain giving, but when he causes pain to others, he never regards himself as pain giving. This is duality. Because of prejudice, he is distinguishing between his own pleasure and pain and that of the other. He does not regard himself and the other as alike, and is trapped in duality.

When one believes in the presence of the same soul in all living beings, conducting oneself alike in pain and pleasure for a long time through one's intellect, one has then realised non-duality in oneself. Duality comes only with pain and pleasure. This is known as self-interest. If someone is devoid of this feeling of pain and pleasure, of himself and the other one, or his own self-interest, he would be fully established in non-duality. He then is not moved by pain and is not attached in pleasure and is fully established in non-duality or in the spirit of cosmological consciousness because he observes the unity of spirit in himself. He does not allow in himself any concept of distinction through being moved by pleasure or pain. When he is devoid of the feeling of onself and the other one and is not moved by the states of pleasure and pain and is steadfast in the state of equanimity through right knowledge, that spiritual striver will then realize the same soul or cosmological consciousness in all living beings. Then there will be no duality of friend and foe etc.

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DAY 22

The growth of intelligence (*buddhi*) and discriminating capabilities (*viveka*) is a blessing of the sprit of power, which is all pervasive, omnipresent and omnipotent. With the growth and development of its inherent intelligence and discriminatory capabilities, the child learns how to behave in the vast external world and how to cultivate congenial, harmonious and healthy interpersonal relations with the persons and products of the mundane world. As a matter of fact, no human being can lead a life all alone without mutual dependence and harmonious inter-personal relations with the persons and products of the external world. All these factors and forces, put together unitedly, collectively, conjointly and summatively, constitute the spiritual power, which is all pervasive and eternally present, controlling and guiding all the living beings of the universe and which is referred to as *Paramatma* in spiritual books. Each living being possesses a bit of Spiritual power of conscionsness, which is called *atma and* which is an intergral part of *Paramatma* (the supreme power of consciousness) and hence under the control of *Paramatma*.

To obey the promptings of *Paramatma*, every living being should lead his life judiciously in the external world in a controlled and disciplined manner, without becoming impulsive and irrational, without becoming obstinate and aggressive, by regulating his eating habits and by taking healthy and congenial foods, by learning and exercising self-control and behaving rationally and intelligently. The more a person exercises self control, the more he becomes careful and cautious, and starts leading his life rationally and intelligently, the more that person will start comprehending and grasping within his being the presence of that eternal, omnipresent and omniscient spiritual power.

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DAY 23

Hindu sages, seers and spiritual scholars strongly advocated that every person should first recognise his ego, then completely surender and dedicate it at the sacred feet of God *(Bhagwan)*. In the *Gita*, *Bhagwan* Krishna admonished Arjuna thus : "My dear Arjuna ! you should renounce all religious rituals and formalities. You should seek only my protection, and devotedly and dedicatedly accept and acknowledge my directions and injunctions". The words "religious rituals and formalities" imply the personal ego and all its tempestuous urges, impulses and temptations.

One should always remember that all types of desires and urges are the demands of one's own mind, or of the indwelling deity *Prajapati*. It is, therefore, best to control and subjugate desires, urges and impulses with the help of intelligence (*buddhi*). As a matter of fact, a person can use his intelligence in two different ways : (i) for personal, selfish gains and benefits, and (ii) for the weal and welfare of the whole mankind and the world at large, without any favouritism. This second type of thinking is adopted and employed by a person when he is blessed with an objective, unbiased and judicious intelligence faculty, referred to as *Vyavsaayatmik Buddhi* in the Gita, *Bhagwan* Krishna declares that He has blessed each and every human being, with such an objective, unbiased and judicious faculty to be used by him to contain the upsurges of his instinctive, irrational, egoistic, impulsive and habitual urges.When a person seeks the shelter and protection of this rational, objective, unbiased and judicious intelligence faculty and of the will of God, then take it for granted that the person has discovered the golden path to realise his well-being and happiness. He will also learn to accept and tolerate hardships, stresses and strains, and thereby bravely face and resist pains and sufferings of deprivation and renunciation.

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DAY 24

The grown up, mature person, by pacifying his mind through invoking the blessings of God should never succumb to the dictates and demands of his instinctual urges and habitual compulsions, The secret of success lies in his sustained efforts and rational, judicious use of his objective, unbiased intelligence faculty. With utmost devotion and dedication, the person should submit and surrender his worldly ego to the divine will (God), who is completely flawless and pure. He should try to overpower and subjugate all his vices and weaknesses such as irresistible desire *(kama)*, irresistible anger *(krodha)*, pseudo suspicion *(sanshay)*, over-riding arrogance *(ahankar)*, enormous attachment *(raga)*, paralysing aversion *(dwesha)*, and varieties and hordes of worldly anxieties and baseless fears, which are universally present in all living beings. These vices and weaknesses, are the creations of the indwelling deity *Prajapati* in all living beings, in the form of multitudes of emotions and urges. In the midst of all these multitudes of vices and weaknesses, the sagacious and sincere devotee of *Bhagwan* (God) will willingly accept and meticulously follow the directions and promptings of his judicious and rational intelligence faculty. He will keep his mind fully alert, while avoiding and eliminating his vices and weaknesses. Every person must protect and preserve his mental peace and poise. Thereafter, in course of time, he will automatically start experiencing and enjoying a unique, inner peace and divine bliss. This divine inner peace and divine bliss help the person in two specific ways : Firstly, it extinguishes the flagrant fire of instinctive urges and material temptations. Secondly, it awakens the human mind to and enlightens it on its indwelling, divine immortal spirit (*atma*) and its relationship with the all-pervading, all-powerful, all-knowing and the eternal *Paramatma* of which *atma* is an inalienable part.

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DAY 25

Every person must develop the ability to recognise and identify his instinctive urges, his habitual compulsions, his turbulent emotional tendencies and his inherent vices and weaknesses. Furthermore, he must also make sustained efforts to completely subjugate and eliminate them from his mind. Thereafter, he will gradually find that he has automatically achieved unique mental peace, poise and serenity. At this stage, he will find that his breathing has become very normal, natural and smooth. He stops feeling the inconvenience of the hot weather. He will have to go for a walk to heartily enjoy the scenic beauty of the land. Doctors and naturopaths always recommend living and breathing in open, wide, unpolluted environments to expose the physical body to the warm and soothing rays of the morning sun. But when the human mind is enticed, entangled and engrossed in worldly worries, it cannot relish the above mentioned, freely supplied facilities of benevolent nature.

There is a very meaningful '*mantra*' (aphorism) in the Vedas, depicting the peace and poise of the human mind : *Om Shanti-antriksham, shanti prithvi, shanti rupa*, etc. This aphorism means : there is complete peace upto the end of the horizon; there is unique tranquillity throughout Mother Earth; there is stillness and serenity in all the oceans of the universe. Similarly, all the deities and spiritual powers are calm and contented. The human mind can experience such internal peace and poise when it completely disengages itself from the hassles of the mundane world. Even an old and aged person has no problem in realizing such inner peace when he disengages his mind from the hectic pursuits of the external world. In essence, only that person can successfully and sincerely undertake religious and spiritual activities who with efforts withdraws his mind from the hassles of the external world and from its material pursuits.

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DAY 26

One major hassle on the spiritual path is that one does not want to give up things for which one has developed addiction, as one feels that one cannot survive without those preferred and cherished things. One must understand the futility of clinging to these chosen things as one day one will have to learn to live without them. So, it will prove very beneficial for the person if he himself willingly gives up his addictions. After giving up those addictions, the person should turn his mind inward and try to comprehend his inner spiritual secrets and inner divine realities.

A religious and conscientious person, who regularly practises meditation and introspection, can conveniently recognise and identify his vices and weaknesses. By disengaging and disentangling his mind from the hectic activities of the mundane world, he can both resist and subjugate all his vices and weaknesses with a resolute and determined mind, to realize his spiritual peace and divine happiness. In such a situation, even if the person gets separated from his fellow beings because of death, he should not worry about anyting as self or soul never dies as it never dissolves. Death cannot disturb or destroy the unique spiritual peace and divine bliss of a religious, God fearing and conscientious person. Such a person never worries about his physical annihilation, nor he gets anxious about quitting this mundane world forever. When a person becomes an expert in identifying, understanding and eliminating his vices and weaknesses, he will also get opportunities to control his temptations and urges in various ways. For example, his strong temptations for eating and drinking and his uncontrollable urge to sleep and rest will get debilitated and will become less virulent.

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DAY 27

The celebration of *Janmashtmi, the* birthday of Lord *Krishna* is symbolic of resisting the temptation for eating and drinking by observing the prescribed fast, as well as of subjugating the devotee's urge for sleep and rest by keeping vigil till the moon rises, at midnight. In the Vedas, it is mentioned that *chandrama manso jaat....* which means that the moon came into existence out of the mind of *Bhagwan*. In other words, there is a very close connection between the moon and the mind, and moon is considered as the controlling deity of the mind, unlike sunlight, which affects and controls all the apparent and external activities of the universe, the moonlight affects and controls the inner and invisible workings of the human mind. It means that a person should know and understand, with a calm, cool and judicious mind, the inner and latent spiritual secrets just as the *Chandradeva*, with its rhythmic and controlled movements. In other words, the moon with its regulated, waxing and waning light starts showering its soothing and cool light on the universe. Thus the words "keeping, vigil till the moon rises at midnight" imply that the appearance of the moon at midnight with its soothing and comforting light to eliminate the intense darkness of the mind. The rising of the moon at the midnight hour to shatter the dense darkness of the night suggests that the mind of the devotee was fully focussed to identify and completely eliminate all his latent and hidden vices and weaknesses. As a matter of fact, the celebrations of *Janmashtami* denote that the devotee should purify his mind by discarding and destroying all his vices and weaknesses with the help of his intellectual capabilities. Only after fulfilling this condition, he can break his fast and eat food. This is the actual significance of observing the fast on *Janmashtami*.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend)

Non-Duality *(Advaita)*

Non-duality means being devoid of the spirit of duality, i.e. regarding no distinction between the individual consciousness (*jiva*) and the cosmological consciousness (*Paramatma*). A living being habitually makes distinctions owing to his pains and pleasures. But if he determines not to make any distinction regarding anyone and if he treats all alike, i.e. if he remains equanimous in a state of pain and pleasure, if he is not trapped by imagination and if he is not willing to conduct himelf differently but if he turns away from both pain and pleasure just watching them as they are, like a spectator, and if he is steadfast in equanimity towards both, it will be regarded as non-duality. If he endures the pain of humilitation like Lord Shiva endured poison, he would feel that there is no difference between the humiliator and the humiliated. This is what is called non-duality.

But this requires a lot of discipline and practice. Wrong view of attachment and aversion, formed owing to pain and pleasure, is the cause of discrimination. If a meditator through the eyes of right knwoledge can digest the poison of pain and if he does not regard pleasure as nectar, develops the habit of being steadfast in the emptiness (*shoonya*) by keeping the mind relaxed through equanimity in both the situations, he would then experience in the emptiness the same blissful consciousness which is known as cosmological consciousness as it pervades alike everywhere and as its dynamism creates all the actions of the world like laughing and weeping etc. He would then experience the same cosmological consciousness devoid of distinctions as non-duality and as manifestation of bliss. When the pain of distinction is calmed through its endurance, and when a person would make no effort to do anything on account of pain and pleasure in the outer world, he would not be provoked in any way and the impulse to do something would gradually be calmed down through practice, and finally the bliss of soul will be manifested.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend) Contd ...

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(127)

Of possessions and wealth one feels pride and delight,
So long remorse and pains do not show death long fight;
As chain of pains renders no pleasure within reach,
Then how they are futile, none is needed to preach.

(128)

Past created being comes out with its might,
Hampers right efforts reacting forthright;
See as you get on well in the teeth of pains,
To keep with sublime truth and wits in strains.

(129)

If objective delight does not condition life,
No one will like to stay in ceaseless worldly strife;
If pains in addition don't cease to show their face,
Except free consciousness where one may find solace.

(130)

Enticing things, as once, came across with nice name,
On frequent contact found changed, turned out not the same,
Rather, contrariwise then, threaten to proceed,
One is blessed, retiring with dignity indeed.

(131)

Being careful and mindful guard yourself all-around,
With slight pain, but, enough to constrain mind is bound;
Slipped into memories things of joy it approves,
If bear up with slight pain surely forthwith it improves.

(132)

Discrete endless ripples in stream like flowing mind,
Whirlpool-like existence with factors all that bind;
In understanding do pass off these as they came,
One's peace is not disturbed, nothing detects to name.

(133)

Series of discrete sounds united as by will,
That seeks ease and comfort makes senses well or ill;
So in all perceptions for objective delight,
Senses all in parts does mind promptly unite.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend) Contd ...

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(134)

Don't expect the joy with sad being today,
That tomorrow will, coming, with it bring;
All days as they fall, as today they stay,
Looked for tomorrow remains good to sting.

(135)

In darkness you awoke of night,
Taming well your mind toiled aright;
Subduing emotions during day,
The sorrows whereby find their way.

(136)

Beliefs, as are settled, though absurd and futile,
Are not shaken with ease, for frail pleasures beguile;
May be reduced in one, those being in others flout,
With whom one has to live, a rare sage finds way out.

(137)

Too much is made offered, so much is to select,
As is good for well-being, ill for it to reject;
For deluding one is not in deceiving slow,
To see you with the rest alike in common flow.

(138)

Baseless, graceless reason moves round sex, wine and wealth,
Dwells sound, well founded one on outward inward health;
One spreads vices, to reap as heaps of rubbish stink,
Wafts as flower's fragrance the others virtue's pink.

(139)

Thinking grown much, a fire, in us ever burns,
Fanned by pride-like factors to an end never turns;
Unchecked, as got up hell by force it mind detains,
Produce, of course, all pains, even sleep and breath retains.

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DAY 29

The festival of *Janmashtami* (associated with the birth of Lord Krishna) is followed by the festival of *Shivaratri* (associated with Lord Shiva). During the festival of *Shivaratri*, the devotee solemnly and sincerely makes all efforts to completely eliminate all his vices and weakness and thereafter concentrates his mind and meditates on the eight primordial, fundamental and eternal forces (elements), i.e. earth, fire, water, air, sky, sun, moon and soul (*atma*). For example, the devotee starts meditating on air. He starts pondering as to how air is stimulating his skin or how strongly air is blowing in the vast and limitless sky or how cool and/or warm air is. While sitting all alone, in a nice, comfortable posture and meditating on air with a concentrated mind, suddenly the person swoons into sleep and his mind creates a unique dream-world, in which the mind starts projecting various scenes from his previous lives for him to watch and witness. This is how a person becomes aware of his unlimited spiritual knowledge which lies buried very deep in the innermost recesses of the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind preserves all the records of thousands of past lives which his soul (*atma*) has actually lived and experienced, and not only the factual records but also the visual scenes of the past lives, as if preserved in a DVD. But the human being has to develop the unique faculty to project those filmed records to reproduce the sights and sounds of the past lives which are fully preserved in the unconscious mind.

After enjoying this mystic and mysterious spiritual experience, he should start meditating on the other primordial eternal forces, such as the Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Sky, the Sun, the Moon and the *atma*, to group their unique qualities. Then suddenly the indelible impressions of his previous lives *(sanskars)* will become active and start projecting

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DAY 30

The Vedantic philosophers' postulate is that *atma* and *Paramatma* are integrally and organically one and the same spiritual entity. At the individual, single, specific level, it is called *atma* or (soul or self), and at the cumulative, collective and universal level it is called *Paramatma* (supreme spiritual entity) and both are eternal. But both these spiritual realities can be understood only by sustained efforts. The indwelling deity *Prajapati* (the god of life) is always present in both types and forms of living beings, and his forces are fully controlling and commanding their instinctive impulses and emotional reactions.

One's personality and characteristics completely colour one's actions and attitudes. All *Vedas, Puranas* and Shastras (Books of Hindu religion and spiritual philosophy) mention and uphold that this whole world is *trigunamayee*, i.e. the whole mankind can be categorised and classified into three kinds of human-beings—*sattwaguna*, *rajoguna* and *tamoguna*. With the knowledge acquired from these scriptures and with the help of his inherent intelligence, objective attitude and scientific mind one can identify his personality type. Also, one must know and understand that a person is always engaged in gratifying the demands of these gunas. As a matter of fact, the very existence of this universe is dependent upon the continuous involvement of the human mind in meeting and gratifying the persistent demands of the three gunas. The destruction of these three gunas is not possible unless God wills it. However, it is possible through the help of meditation with utmost devotion and dedication, watching and witnessing all one's actions, interactions, reactions and transactions with full concentration.

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DECEMBER

Enjoying Eternal Bliss

Meditation is a continual and earnest process of training ourselves to go past the mind, turn more and more inwards, go deep within and connect ourselves with our inner self. Deep within lies a perennial source of eternal bliss (*sachidananda* or the bliss of the *Brahman*). Deep meditation enables us to tap that source and enjoy eternal bliss. Easier said than done! Even after years of meditation such an experience may elude us. Yet we must continue to strive with greater enthusiasm and perseverance. We have to constantly check our every deed, utterance and thought, nip each mental fetter as it appears, tone up our ethical living and increase the quality of our solitary sittings, mindful breathing, concentration and introspection. When all this becomes an established way of life we will find it easy to meditate. Once the joy of meditation starts manifesting, it will become difficult to give up meditation! We come to realize that real happiness lies within. It is pure, unconditional bliss, and is not dependent on any external object, condition or person. This is *atmananda* or the bliss of the self. Once we realize this inner bliss, our further efforts must be to preserve it and make it our permanent treasure. After that we require nothing else to keep us happy and peaceful forever.

Editor

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Day 1



DECEMBER

the sights, scenes and sounds of the previous lives.

The person, who is completely under the sway of these three *gunas*, is just like the legendary demon Tripurasur, symbolising the bloated and arrogant ego. *Bhagwan Shankar*, who sits all alone in deep contemplation, just like a yogi in samadhi, as if intoxicated with Divine Bliss is immune to the influence of these three gunas. He is always fully conscious, active and alert and all-knowing. His lethal weapon, called *Pashupat-astra*, which liberates the human mind from the all-pervading effects and influences of the three *gunas*, is a symbol of the omnipotent weapon of higher intelligence and superior intellectual powers. When a person gets liberated from the all-pervading effects and influences of the three *gunas* with the help of his higher intelligence and superior intellectual powers, no annihilation of the person from the mudane world will take place, instead the life of the person will continue as usual. When the person becomes conscious of his *atma*, or when the person realizes his inner, eternal self (*atma*), his ego (which is the by-product of the three gunas and takes the credit for performing all his deeds in the external world) will automatically dissolve and disappear. He will stop regarding his everchanging and transient physical body as his *atma*. But the survival of the physical body is not possible without performing some actions which are governed by these three *gunas*. However, when a person develops insight and when he becomes aware of his *atma*, he destroys all the effects and influences of the three *gunas* by using the lethal weapon called Pashupata Astra, i.e. his intellectual and rational capabilities. That person only who, thus, performs minimal actions which are necessary for the survival of his physical body and existence, will escape from the immutable law of *karma*.

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DAY 2

By turning the mind inwards, and with the help of introspection and meditation, when a person actually knows the latent inner realities of his *atma* or soul, he will automatically start witnessing the marvellous and mysterious universal drama enacted by *Paramatma* or the universal soul. To start with, first of all, he should try to understand the actions, reactions, interactions and transactions of his own emotions, and later on, try to learn the interplay and interactions of emotions in other persons. Just as emotions strongly affect and influence his own mind, similarly emotions affect and influence the minds of other persons who are human beings like him. A person who is blessed with pious judicious mind, will consider the intellectual capabilities of the person with whom he deals and then will excuse the vices and weaknesses of the other person. Thus by educating and enlightening his mind with an objective, rational and judicious intellect, a person can control and vanquish his powerful passions, instinctive impulses and habitual behaviour and thereby attain spiritual salvation. In the beginning, a person should lead his life as per his blind faith in religious rituals and established familiar social traditions by undertaking the study of religious scriptures, by attending spiritual seminars and by attending religious discourses of learned sages and saints with committed devotion and dedication. With the passage of time and with the help of an alert mind, self analysis, introspection and meditation, the person will start understanding his emotional onslaughts, instinctual urges, habitual compulsions and personal vices and weaknesses, and after that identification he will take suitable measures to safeguard himself continuously in various types of situations, until it becomes a part of his nature, a habit.

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DAY 3

Whenever a person indulges in vices and weaknesses, such indulgence at once affects his breathing process, which also upsets his various organic systems and their functions in the physical body, which can lead to various types of diseases in the body. In other words, the abnormal breathing process can become the root cause of many painful physical ailments. For curing this, the sages and saints of yore prescribed a golden formula that first of all a person should get rid of all his emotional excitements, compulsive temptations, habitual weaknesses and impulsive vices. Thereafter, with a settled and peaceful mind, the person should start breathing naturally and normally in a systematic, rhythmic manner. The person should not adopt the sleeping posture by lying down on his bed in a relaxed manner. But instead, the person should adopt a formal sitting posture like that of a yogi, with his back and neck in one line, erect and straight. Thereafter, the person should, with efforts and consciously concentrate his mind on his breathing process and watch as to how he is breathing in and breathing out. Usually as a matter of habit, the mind remains fixed on various other thoughts and not on the breathing process. The mind in fact, keeps jumping from one thought to another thought, from one situation to another situation, continuously and endlessly. In order to stabilise his mind, the person should, wilfully and consciously, concentrate his mind on his breathing process, as to how he is breathing in and breathing out. By adopting this golden formula, a person will automatically disengage and disentangle his mind from the various worldly concerns, thoughts and situations, because the mind can attend to only one thing at a time.

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DAY 4

If a person concentrates his mind on his breathing process, his personal and habitual vices and weaknesses will die a natural death because his mind does not heed and bother about them. In the *Gita*, Lord Krishna declares: "Dear Arjuna! Sincere devotees easily overcome and vanquish their vices of yearning, anger and fear, etc. In other words they achieve *mukti* easily. Here '*mukti*' means emancipation or freedom from the shackles of their personal and habitual vices and weaknessess. But to achieve such *mukti*, it is essential for the person to synchronise, stabilise and equalize his *pranapan* activity. This phrase means to breathe very carefully and intelligently, with the mind fully concentrated on the breathing process, that is, how the person is breathing in *(prana)* and how he is breathing out *(apana)* activity. Such careful and intelligent breathing will be according to *Dharmamarg* or in the correct manner.

As a first step, the person must essentially feel the need and necessity to cultivate and develop in his own person, very devotedly and dedicatedly the ethical, religious and spiritual values as well as lead his life accordingly. He must avoid indulging in unethical, irreligious, impulsive, irrational and anti-social activities, and similar other unethical and illegal activities. He should modulate and control his temptations for specific foods and drinks. He should develop the habit of introspection and self analysis to fully understand his mental tendencies. When he sincerely starts practising this routine, he will automatically start avoiding and eliminating his personal vices and weaknesses. He will also start acknowledging and accepting the judicious directions and decisions of his intellect *(buddhi)*, as to why and what for he must avoid and eliminate his personal vices and weaknesses.

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DAY 5

When a person cultivates and develops the habit to lead a disciplined, balanced, regulated and rational life, he will automatically start breathing in a healthy , normal and stable manner. He will then start relishing and enjoying the touch of the cool and refreshing breeze, and he will love to bask in the comforting warmth of the sun, and he will start appreciating and admiring the role and contribution of the eight basic, universal and eternal elements of Nature *(vasus)* in sustaining the universe. Then *Vasudev Bhagwan* will also reveal Himself with all his divine and celestial grandeur and glory .

What are the eight basic, universal and eternal elements of nature *(vasus)* and who is *Vasudev Bhagwan* ? The eight basic, universal and eternal elements of nature are earth, water, fire, air, ether *(aakaash)*, sun, moon, and soul (*atma*). *Vasudev Bhagwan* is the Supreme Lord of these eight basic, universal and eternal elements of nature. The ancient saints and sages *(yogis)* used to purify and sanctify their minds by meditating on the eight basic, universal and eternal elements of Nature *(vasus)* and their limitless contribution for sustaining this universe. In the same manner every person should purify and sanctify his mind by adopting the method of the ancient saints and sages. When a person starts meditating on these eight elements of Nature *(vasus)*, with utmost devotion and dedication he too will be blessed to witness the divine form of *Vasudev Bhagwan* with all His celestial grandeur and glory. This celestial experience will quickly convince the person that his cherished desire to have a higher, nobler and superior status on his rebirth has been fully accepted and granted.

He should resist the attractions of the mundane world, and tolerate the pangs of this withdrawal of his mind. Thus, augmenting his love, respect and reverence for his Divine Atma, he will gradually achieve his ultimate aim of Self-Realization.

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DAY 6

The main and essential purpose of adopting an ethical, religious and spiritual way of life is to prepare the person to know as to where this life ultimately ends. If the essential objective of his life is to gratify all his physical lusts and worldly longings *(trishna)*, his life will end only in pain and suffering, because physical lusts and worldly longings are insatiable and can never be fully gratified during his entire life. Such a life of physical lusts and worldly longings always persists and ends only with the end of his physical existence. For their gratification, the mind of the person remains completely entangled and enticed in the external mundane world. The person starts fearing his death because he does not know as to how, when and where he will gratify his cherished physical lusts and worldly longings. The person who fully grasps and who understands the unique and eternal reality during his present life time will quickly and conveniently overcome and get rid of his pain and agony by disengaging his mind from the external mundane world. He will not be afraid of death and he will easily achieve *mukti* or spiritual salvation. He fully knows that death is just a transit station where *atma* transfers itself from one physical body to another and it is called transmigration of soul. The transmigration of the soul from one physical body to another physical body is determined by the good or bad deeds committed by the person during his present life as well as during the past and previous lives of the person and by their accumulated effects *(sanskaras)*. This is called *Karma* Theory. To attain the ultimate goal of his life namely self realization and the eternal merging of his *atma* with *Paramatma*, the person should begin gradually weaning his mind from the mundane comforts of the external world and instead find solace and bliss by turning his mind inwards, and leading his life in an ethical, religious and spiritual way.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend)

Ten Great Powers of Liberation *(Das Bal)*

Developing the ten powers like friendship etc., referred to earlier and strengthening them through practice, and realizing the need to move constantly on the regulated path of life to establish these powers and putting them into practice is the only way to achieve salvation. In order to attain salvation, while being alive (*jivan mukta*), it essential to be free from all fetters, which belong to the external world. The entire bondage that remains loaded in the mind in various forms is in fact the bondage of the world, that one experiences through his sense organs like eyes, ears etc., and that appears in the knowledge of his mind. Without unburdening the mind of these fetters, the soul is not manifested as true knowledge in the self and fulfilment is not experienced. That is why it is essential to cut the fetters— arising in the mind through the sense organs — to attain the permanent fulfilment of the self manifested as the knowledge of the inner self or soul.

If a man renounces the external passion for the objects of all sense organs, if he regards their pleasure as transient, and as non-soul different from knowledge, and if he experiences them in himself as pure knowledge and not as external objects, as in the case of first knowledge of a child, it will be pure, eternal knowledge and its experience will be of eternal fulfilment devoid of the feeling of pain caused by *trishna*. For this acquisition of the ten virtues of *Sadhna* is essential. These are : (1) Friendly Attitutde *(maitri)*, (2) Compassion *(karuna)*, (3) Praiseworthy attitude towards the good qualities of others *(mudita)*, (4) Showing indifference towards bad qualities of others *(upeksha)*, (5) Forgiveness *(kshama)*, (5) Right conduct *(sheel)*, (7) Spirit of Renunciation/Charity *(daan)*, (8) Right efforts *(veerya)*, (9) Absorbed Meditation *(dhyana)*, and (10) Truth bearing knwoeldge *(prajna)*.

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DAY 7 (1st Weekend) Contd ...

It is most important to strengthen these ten aspects of spiritual life or spiritual meditation. Human life is habitually limited to the material sphere and a person always remains entangled in the world of desires (*kamaloka*), which act as a hazard to his peaceful existence. In such a state, a person may redeem his falling mind through faith in God and in the lovers of the divine path. Therefore, three types of faith are considered most essential: (i) Faith in God who is eternally free and who knows the whole path (ii) Faith in religion complete in all its aspects, (iii) Faith in those who are pursuing this path (including saints and sages of yore), and who have advanced to the level of becoming masters.

Just as confidence in right faith is acceptable as the first step towards freedom from, worldly fetters of materialism, similarly energy (*veerya*), mindfulness (*smriti*), absorbed meditation (*samadhi*) and truth bearing knowledge (*prajna*) are suitable steps to be adopted and are very essential. Energy *(veerya)* means courage or strength, and this power of energy manifests itself in four vital forms: (i) As soon as desire, doubt, anger, envy, intolerance for the happiness of others, finding fault with the good qualities of others etc., manifest their presence, and as soon as they impel a person on the wrong path contrary to his religious faith, he must throw them out, (ii) Again, it is throwing these sins and wrong tendencies out of mind with patience in such a manner that they cannot return. For this end, one must examine in mind (introspect) the habit contrary to well-being so that the mind turns away from its temporary advantage and pleasure and so that it proceeds towards the fruit of supreme salvation. All this will lead to the permanent renunciation of these sins and wrong tendencies. (iii) The third power of energy is to develop in the mind noble qualities of dispassion, forgiveness, contentment, patience, renunciation, austerity etc. helpful in attaining salvation (iv) Fourth power of energy makes these most useful and noblest qualities steadfast in the mind, for the growth of the power of contemplation, meditation and mindfulness to guard against the wrong tendencies.

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DAY 8

In order to ward off the fear of death, the learned seers of yore after conducting intensive study and deep research in the field of death and dying, discovered an ethical, religious and spiritual way of life. By leading his life in this way, one can come to know that there is an eternal, immortal, spiritual entity (*atma*) dwelling in his physical body and as long as this eternal, immortal, spiritual entity keeps dwelling within the physical body of a person, the physical body remains fully active and alert in the external world. Further, when the person establishes close contact with his indwelling, immortal, eternal spiritual entity, he will experience unique spiritual bliss and no force or factor of this mundane world can affect and disturb this spiritual bliss. The learned saints and sages called this indwelling, immortal, eternal spiritual entity *antaratma*, which is the main source of consciousness or the existence and identity of the person .This *antaratma* (Soul) is a part and parcel of *Paramatma* (God) or *Brahman.*

In order to turn his mind inwards, the person has to adopt some religious rituals, *(karmakand)*, as well as devotional attitude and practical commitment to lead the spiritual way of life. He will have to enlighten his mind by studying the great spiritual scriptures and devotional literature. *Karmakand* is thus the first pillar of the religious and spiritual way of life. The second pillar represents self-study, introspection and meditation on the religious and ethical values and their cultivation in life with utmost commitment and unconditional plus self surrender *(dhyana* plus *bhakti)*. The third pillar represents divine knowledge *(gyana)* which is realized through the judicious mixture of *dhyana* and *bhakti* (absorbed meditation plus self surrender).One may take help by collective devotional singing or reading or hearing scriptures *(kirtan and kathaa)*.

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DAY 9

The main and primary objective of leading an ethical and religious life is that the person should somehow disengage and disentangle his mind from the hectic pursuits of the external, mundane world and instead engage his mind in introspection and meditation, when he is all alone in solitude. However, one should be careful not to fall asleep after such a withdrawal, as he may again resume and get lost in the hectic activities of the external world as soon as he wakes up. So one has to be very careful and judicious in living. He should understand and realize that negative emotions, such as anger and lust make the person irrational and unsocial. He should always observe the social ethos and learn to keep his mind under control. When a person adopts the rational, judicious and disciplined way of life, then automatically he will start leading his life as per the ethical and religious rules enshrined in the religious scriptures. This is the essence of *'Karmakand'* (Path of Conduct).

To start with, the person should become rational and judicious in his behaviour and conduct. He should avoid slaughtering animals, violence and terrorism. He should stop cheating and stealing. He should stop bragging and boasting. His behaviour and conduct with his fellow beings should be upright and ideal. He should strictly avoid all types of addictions, intoxicants and drugs. Only thereafter, he should worry about his moral, ethical and spiritual welfare. To achieve this objective, he should develop the habit of sitting all alone in solitude in an erect yogic posture. This posture is necessary for overcoming lassitude, lethargy and laziness and is good both for his physical and mental health. Furthermore, the person must make sincere efforts to keep both his body and mind very neat, clean and pure.

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DAY 10

When a person understands at the proper time, stage and phase of his life that too much indulgence and gratification of habitual comforts is actually very harmful, he will at once start forcing his mind to desist from such indulgences and gratifications. At such a time, when he forces his mind to desist from habitual comforts, he should be ready to face and tolerate the painful protests of his mind. Tolerance of such painful protests is called *'Tapa'* (or tapasya). The word *'tapa'* means to get heated or develop high temperature. In other words, painful protests of the mind always disturb the mental peace of the person. When a person starts tolerating the painful protests of his mind, his mind will gradually develop its capacity and capability to bear the mental anguish. In course of time, his mind will get settled and become peaceful and then the person should make earnest efforts to learn about his inner self or *antaratma*. A person should start identifying and acknowledging the existence of his *atma*, the factors and forces which disturb the mind. All such knowledge constitutes the study of the inner self or the mind or the inherent consciousness or the indwelling divine spirit or the spiritual entity within the physical body *(atma)* in this evolutionary and developmental order.

Taking anger and agitation as an example, when he locates and when he learns the actual facts and forces which are influencing, instigating and inciting his mind to get angry and agitated, this knowledge will constitute the first step towards self-awareness and self-consciousness (*atmadarshan*). But such initial self-awareness or self consciousness is yet rudimentary, immature and incomplete because the natural self—the survival instinct – gets very easily influenced, instigated and incited even with minor and insignificant facts and forces when it faces any threat. This natural self is present in all, irrespective of age and gender, head strong, self gratifying, irrational, selfish and easily excitable.

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DAY 11

Before going to sleep or when one gets up in the morning or even when one is all alone, at that time one should ruminate and meditate as to what are the facts and forces which disturb mental peace and inner tranquillity. This practice will surely help him to understand and learn many wonderful lessons to lead his life properly, ethically, religiously and judiciously. Such introspection and meditation, or such self-examination, self-study, self-awareness and self-assessment will constitute one's first step towards knowing one's indwelling, eternal, spiritual entity (*atma*). One needs a thorough knowledge of all one's inner motivating factors and the extent of their pulling and pushing powers before one starts to mitigate and defuse the inherent powers of each one, gradually, and finally to eliminate and uproot all of them completely from one's mind, with full caution and care. All these steps constitute and contribute to the realization of inner invisible spirit.

The searching and scanning of the inner motivating factors and forces is of great help to the person in two ways :

(i) Since these inner motivating factors and forces are not apparent and visible, they cannot explicitly cause friction and fight.

(ii) The person starts learning to live all alone in solitude, because he can identify his inner motivating factors and forces, when he withdraws his mind from the humdrum activities of the external world and when he starts scanning and searching his inner motives. When he regulates and disciplines his life in the abovesaid manner, he will easily develop the habit to sit erect in a yogic posture and engage his mind in introspection and meditation (i.e. self-examination, self-study, self-assessment or *atma-darshan*). Thus his power of consciousness *(pranashakti)*, which was earlier all scattered in the hectic activities of the external world will get concentrated in the mind.

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DAY 12

As a matter of fact, all the living beings of the universe are motivated and manipulated by their vices and weaknesses. One should recognize, admit and acknowledge their existence in one's being and try to defuse and desensitize them. When one successfully defuses and desensitizes them, one will at once experience inner peace. Achieving inner peace is one of the most cherished objectives of every person. In spiritual literature, it is mentioned as divine bliss *(atmanand)*. Saints and sages of yore have proclaimed very lucidly that when the *antah-karan* of a person gets purified and sanctified then only the person can experience the divine bliss. '*antahkaran*' means the mind, which keeps the person engaged and entangled even in insignificant and minor matters. When the human mind gets completely tired and exhausted by its hectic pursuits and worldly problems, it feels lazy and lethargic and falls asleep. This devilish nature of the human mind, i.e. firstly, getting engaged, entangled and enticed in the hectic activities and pursuits of the external, mundane world , and secondly, feeling tired and exhausted and seeking shelter in sleep , makes the person most anxious, apprehensive and threatened at the very idea of death and dying. The saints and sages of yore, have always stressed that the person should inculcate, that he should adopt, and that he should sincerely lead an ethical, religious and spiritual way of life, to ward off his false apprehensions. For this end the person should make maximum efforts to recognise his personal vices and worldly temptations and thereafter gradually overcome, uproot and eliminate them, one by one and completely. Once the person develops full insight into the working and machinations of his mind *(antaratma)*, he will never be duped by the attractive temptations of the mundane world, as well as by his instinctive compulsions and habitual temptations. Thus using his *buddhi* (intellect) in an objective manner, he will surely realize *Bhagwan* (Almighty God).

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DAY 13

When a person willingly tolerates all the stresses and strains for practising meditation and achieves *samadhi*, only then the person starts experiencing and witnessing the sights and scenes of his past lives and his latent secrets. The devotee has to practise the well known Ashtang Yoga, the yoga of eight successive steps: (i)Yam (ii) Niyam (iii) *Aasan* (iv) *Pranayam* (v) *Pratyahar* (vi) *Dharna* (vii) *Dhyana* and (viii) *Samadhi*, for the complete realization of that *atma (antaratma)*, which is a part and parcel of *Paramatma*. All the characteristics and traits of *Paramatma* are also present in *atma*, in a miniature form. The vedic aphorism *'tattwamasi' i.e.* I am just like Him, recapitulates the same sentiment as "*atma* so *Paramatma*". However, to experience and realize this divine light, a person should adopt a noble, ethical and religious way of life by exercising complete control over his vices and weaknesses, maintaining his mental peace through contentment and making sustained efforts towards the goal.

Learned saints and sages of yore have proclaimed that the extent to which the human mind harbours vices and weaknesses, to the same extent, the breathing process of that person will get disturbed, resulting in various types of mental maladies and bodily diseases. Only when the breathing process is healthy, normal, regular and stable, the person will enjoy a healthy and happy life. When the human mind is free from all types of vices and weaknesses, and when it is not affected by worldly worries, such a mind can easily begin to introspect and meditate about the eternal and essential eight elements of nature *(vasus)* viz-earth, water, fire, air, ether *(akash)*, sun, moon, and soul *(atma)*. When one's mind is deeply absorbed, concentrated and sharply focused on meditating on these eight *vasus*, suddenly he may experience a unique, mysterious and mystical joy, an inner spiritual bliss.

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DAY 14 (2nd Long Weekend)

Ten Great Powers of Liberation (*Dus Bal*)

The third power of mindfulness (*smriti*) means the presence of mind. A person must be always conscious of the state of his body, sense organs, mind and intellect, and keep himself away from wrong actions, wrong words and wrong conduct, contrary to the path of salvation. He must maintain a right and balanced life in the world, following the golden rule "one task, one focus". For instance, great persons direct about the body that (i) a person must be mindful of his actions and do them carefully and with alertness. Similarly, he must be (ii) mindful of the pursuit of sense organs (iii) of the attitudes and wrong tendencies of the mind, (iv) of all the decisions of the intellect, (v) he must also be mindful of the feelings of pleasure and pain because even in these feelings the intellect may take a wrong decision and the mind may throw the sense organs on the wrong path by developing wrong feelings and wrong tendencies. Therefore, by keeping the mind alert or being mindful in the aforesaid five situations, if one leads his life and then nothing wrong will happen, and he will be able to pursue the path of religious faith.

Because of the slavery to pleasure in association with others, one feels pain in solitude. If one can endure pain and if one can devote himself to actions in pain and if one can live by ignoring the pleasures of the object, one will realise his inner self in meditation which is at the root of the whole world and whose knowledge provides supreme happiness. This indeed is the way to selfless action i.e. committing an action when the mind is not absorbed in the desire of external pleasure. This is indeed called union with selfless action *(nishkam karmayoga)*, and it is not nishkam *karamayoga* if one acts while his mind is thinking of the external pleasure of the objects.

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DAY 14 (2nd Long Weekend) contd.

Verses of the Divine Spiritual Life

(140)

Let natal being weep for the same delight,
With no liking for lessons setting right;
Let it sing mournful songs ever to be,
Knowing being open eyes, but real to see.

(141)

Genuine reason is the reasonable name,
Applied rightly to much adored Lord's fame;
Qualities enjoy whose world wide renown,
In devotee's pure heart seated alone.

(142)

Deep interested in all pleasant state,
One day, existence bears himself to hate;
What he becomes and charges as the rest,
In being person is educating the best.

(143)

Things of the world are believed to be bright,
Mind takes flight for them promptly for delight;
For in feeling fine, hence, bright in belief,
If gained, satisfy child as for relief.

(144)

Things contacted, vibrate all mind,
Modifying as fine or unfine;
Feelings decide, then how they bind,
Nice or otherwise as they shine.

(145)

One may put out fire of all thinking well,
Who can on perfect emptiness, full dwell;
Sheds pleasure's bane and endures pain instead,
By application, life long, gets ahead.

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DAY 15

One should regard all the eight *vasus* as divine powers and start remembering, recalling, pondering and meditating on the specific characteristics and qualities of those eternal elements—earth, water, sun, air, akash, fire, moon and soul. The divine power which makes one aware of these eight *vasus*, is the spiritual entity, identified and named by the sages and saints as *atma*. The first seven *vasus* (i.e. earth, water, fire, air, ether *(akash)*, sun and moon) are physical, where as the eighth *vasu* (*i.e. atma*) is non-physical. One will then witness all of a sudden, when he is in the state of deep, absorbed meditation *(samadhi)*, the supreme spiritual power manifesting itself in human form, whom learned saints and sages called *Vasudev* (the Lord and controller of eight *vasus*). One will realize that *Vasudev* is part and parcel of one's inner self, whom learned saints and sages have called *atma*, and *Vasudev* is no other than *Paramatma*. Thus, he will explicitly understand that *atma* is part and parcel of *Paramatma*, and hence *atma* possesses all the characteristics and traits of *Paramatma*. In the state of *samadhi*, along with the vision of *Vasudev*, one will also witness many other beautiful scenes. In other words, all the sights and scenes of the seven *vasus*, which constitute the *brahmand* (cosmos) or this mundane world, can be easily recaptured and recapitulated by the immortal *atma*, the eighth *vasu* as postulated by Indian Philosophy. As a matter of fact, the entire drama of the cosmos *(brahmand)* is the creation of *Paramatma*– the universal, eternal, supreme consciousness, which is dwelling within the physical body of each living being in the form of *atma*—the self, the spirit (soul) or consciousness, in a specified individualised, miniature form. Thus the seeker should adopt the philosophy of *'nishkama karma'*, keeping before his eyes his main goal of worldly life to unite his *atma* with *Paramatma* (moksha or spiritual salvation).

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DAY 16

The most beneficial and cherished goal of a person is to know and realize *Brahman* or *Paramatma*. What is Brahman or *Paramatma* ? Mostly, the person does not know as to what is *Brahman* or *Paramatma*. There is a cogent reason for this inability of the person. Right from his birth in this world a person has learnt to live and survive only with the help and company of other persons. Nobody knows how to live and survive all alone in solitude, without the help and company of other persons. However, *Brahman* or *Paramatma* or *Bhagwan* can be known and realized only when the person is all alone, in solitude.

As a matter of fact, *Brahman* or *Paramatma* or *Bhagwan* can be known and realized when a person seeking Him starts sitting all alone in solitude. The entire universe, together with all its components and creations, combinedly and unitedly, constitute *brahmand* (Cosmos) of which Brahman or *Paramatma* is the Master. Once the person acquires awareness and knowledge of *Brahman (Bhagwan or Paramatma)*, his mind will at once start experiencing a unique inner spiritual bliss, without any help of external factors. However, it is very difficult for a person to sit all alone and enjoy his solitude, because since his birth he has been tuned to live in a company of other persons, to develop emotional inter personal relations. As long as these inter personal relations are mutually beneficial and socially cordial, they progress and prosper. Such companionship is very welcome. But life itself is always changing. Change is the law of Nature. With the changing age and time, these emotional relations do not remain the same and are altered. The cordial and healthy feelings of companionship also vanish in course of time. Sentiments of love and liking, which were so evident at one time, slowly wither and dissipate with the passage of time.

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DAY 17

Initially, the external mundane world appears very interesting and attractive both to the child and to the adult. They feel that the eternal world is full of material objects which provide all types of comforts and entertainments. But by indulging excessively in these worldly comforts, the person gets so much addicted to them that he finds it very difficult to live without them and that he feels a lot of inconvenience, misery and pain, in their absence. He gets very upset, grumbles and protests and even develops emotional depression. Thus the ultimate result of adopting the materialistic way of life is nothing but pain and suffering. On the other hand, when a person adopts the rational, ethical, judicious, religious and spiritual way of life, he experiences boundless, eternal inner spiritual bliss. Religious books and spiritual literature have always proclaimed very loudly and lucidly that the one and the only goal of human life is to acquire and cultivate the full knowledge of *Brahman (Paramatma or Bhagwan)* which is possible only through a disciplined life. Every person should clearly understand at the very outset that the material comforts are always tarnished with three defects; (i) these are temporary/ transitory, (ii) always end in pain and (iii) are non-spiritual.

"Man is a social animal" it is said, and as a matter of fact, it is society which bestows the individuality and identity (ego) to a person, which always clings to him. The person develops feelings of love and respect for his fellow beings and many other similar emotions of social recognition and mutual regard. Thus, every person tries his best to preserve and protect his social image, and feels offended when someone else tries to tarnish it, and even retaliates, and develops aversion *(dwesha)* towards him. One should by practice evolve one's mind not to fall a victim to such feeling to avoid its after effects.

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DAY 18

Saints and sages always exhorted that a person should never opt for worldly happiness, which is derived through the persons and products of the mundane world. Instead, he should make honest and committed efforts to know and realize his *atma* and *Paramatma*, which are both eternal, changeless and full of spiritual bliss. If one cultivates and develops intense devotion and dedication for *Paramatma* or *Brahman*, and if one learns to live affectionately and peacefully with one's fellow-beings, with one's mind free from all types of vices (such as anxiety and apprehension) and instead experiences mental peace and spiritual bliss, it is a sure sign that one has successfully realized *Paramatma*. One must always remember, that among all living beings, it is only the human being *(jivatma)*, who is capable to gain awareness of *atma* and *Paramatma*.

When a human being *(jivatma)* starts making intense, devoted and dedicated efforts to understand the relationship between *atma* and *Paramatma*, during this process it passes through the various specific stages of spiritual growth, called spiritual spheres *(Loka)*. The *jivatma* (the human-being) relishes various levels of spiritual bliss in the hierarchy of spiritual spheres. The first spiritual sphere has been identified as *mrituloka* (the mundane world). It is followed by *swargaloka*, *brahmaloka*, *vishnuloka*. But the final and last stage of spiritual evolution is where *atma* merges with *Paramatma* forever, loses its identity and gets transformed into *Paramatma*.It is called *moksha* or spiritual salvation. The eternal abode of *Paramatma* is called *vaikunthaloka* (the source of endless and unaltering spiritual bliss). Every person can realize all these types of spiritual spheres by making sincere and honest persistent efforts and by living properly.

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DAY 19

In *bhaktiyoga* or *bhaktimarg* of God realization (the other two are *karmamarg* and *gyanamarg*), when one sits all alone in solitude, one should try to know and understand *Bhagwan* (God). One should select any one sacred name and utter with utmost devotion, dedication and sincerity. This is called *'Japa'*, and it constitutes the first step of *bhaktimarg*. When one is busy in that dedicated recitation and repetition, he may also notice that various types of sounds are coming from the external world. Somewhere, people are beating drums and celebrating some social function. Somewhere, there is religious congregation, such as *'Jagrata'* (devotional vigil), and one's mind gets engaged in hearing those external sounds, and obviously gets disturbed by a loud noise.

As this juncture, instead of remonstration and protestation one should train one's mind to be innocent, naive, guileless and pure like that of a child, who when hears a sound (whether of a train or a truck or an aeroplane), at once he/she starts jumping out of joy . He does not feel disturbed and distracted. He/she loves the world as it is. If, in the same manner, when one hears some disturbing sounds while one is practising meditation *(or namajapa)*, if one starts relishing those sounds, one will at once achieve the mental state of the child and also experience the spiritual bliss of the innocent child. One will not remonstrate and protest against the external sounds and noises, nor will one's mind feel distracted and disturbed. Whatever happens in the external world, one should regard it as part and parcel of the plans of the all–pervading *Brahman* and feel happy and friendly with them. But one has to develop deep insight into all these worldly happenings to decipher and decode the divine scheme of *Brahman*, all the time remembering his ultimate goal of God-realization.

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DAY 20

The path to self realization also entails certain beliefs to be ingrained in the seeker who chooses to tread on. He should be perfectly convinced that all the living beings of the universe are under the control and direction of one *Paramatma* who is all pervasive in the entire creation and the cosmos. Further he must have a blind conviction that his *atma* (which is essentially a part and parcel of *Paramatma)* is eternal and everlasting. This means that death is only a transit stage, when *atma* gets transformed from one physical body to another physical body (called the law of transmigration of soul). Also the fact, that, although this external world is called the mundane world which has never been completely destroyed or eternally annihilated. Only the physical and material component of the living being is perishable and temporary, but the spiritual component of the living being is eternal and everlasting. Also the fact to be always kept in view is that, though the *atma* is eternal and ever lasting just like Paramatma, which is eternal, all-pervasive and all-knowing, it is limited, circumscribed, specific and individualised divine power of consciousness. One has to merge and transform his *Atma* into *Paramatma* (which is called God-realization). The acknowledgment and acceptance of *Paramatma* (the supreme divine power of consciousness) must not be just at the intellectual and theoretical level; it must as well be tried, tested and verified at the practical and experimental level. Such spiritual transformation is possible only when one gives up seeking his own selfish, personal and individual welfare and well being, and instead start seeking very sincerely and committedly the welfare and well being of the entire universe and its constituents. It is essential to cultivate and develop one's inner peace and spiritual serenity by controlling and subjugating all his insatiable worldly desires and material longings. And then one day all of a sudden, *Paramatma* or *Brahman* will reveal Himself in all His grandeur.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend)

Absorbed Meditation (*Samadhi*)

Samadhi literally means absorbed meditation, freeing the mind from all the four directions, directing it towards some particular object, or establishing it in some purpose. Now one who seeks to attain spiritual fulfilment must see where to establish one's mind. To attain freedom from the fetters of the world as well as to resolve the attending doubts, the solution lies in one's soul, or in the search for the soul in oneself and in being steadfast in one's seat of meditation. The sphere of absorbed meditation includes thoughtful awakening of right knowledge, watching the approaching pains in meditation, realizing the worldly mind as causing pain, enduring pain to encourage the mind to turn away from it, and to prepare it to endure the pain of restraint, and keeping the mind steadfast by dispelling all doubts from the mind.

First of all one must think of one's life as to what one is doing, whether it is good or bad. One must have faith and pay attention to what one hears from the scriptures or from one's teachers so that one may learn rules for regulating one's life appropriately. Confidence in right faith does not let a person favour the highly irregular worldly pleasures. Fear of greater pain, or fear of losing the habitual pleasures or fear of pain at separation from that excessive pleasure does not let a person trust the maxims of restraints advised in the scriptures. All this may be avoided by sitting in meditation and contemplation after turning away the mind from all those pleasures. One must awaken right thoughts of spiritual truth by uttering the words of right reason and turning the mind away from sloth, sleep etc. Thus awakening the right thoughts through reason and realizing the truth and establishing it in the mind without any doubt or confusion in the mind is called absorbed meditation.

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DAY-21 (3rd Weekend) Continued ...

Truth-bearing knowledge *(Prajna/Pragya)*

As long as meditation is fettered by the pleasures of worldly objects and by the wave of worldly life, this truth though existing, is not revealed to the mind. External pleasures, keeping in mind external self interests, and being entangled in wrong decisions on seeking them, the mind's union with thoughts about them owing to their natural attraction, inclination towards them and even desire for them, spending all one's time in thinking about them in various forms, trying to acquire them secretly or openly, through theft or some trick, in a truthful or false manner—these are all obstacles in the realization of the spiritual truth. But what should be done ? All these sins run the world. The power of the world is with them.

A person of the spiritual life has only the power of God that can intensify right knowledge.This may also be awakened, by efforts and confidence in right faith. The awakening of right knowledge is indeed the true revelation of the truth bearing knowledge *(Prajna)*. This truth bearing knowledge reveals spiritual truth and reveals to the seeker of salvation the supreme state of salvation manifested as soul by freeing him from all fetters with its full force. *Prajna* is gradually strengthened, it grows stronger at first in minor truths of eating, drinking, speaking, sleeping, waking, even in the truth of the pursuits of sense organs, wrong tendencies of the mind and decisions of the intellect. The truth of its decisions is confirmed one after the other. This truth bearing knowledge does not arise from hearing and reading but close realization of truth through experience reveals the truth bearing knowledge. This cannot be attained without crossing the barriers of knowledge provided by nature and sense-organs and beliefs of the externally oriented mind, and one has to make efforts by being steadfast in an absorbed meditation to that end.

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DAY 21 (3rd Weekend) Contd....

Verses of the Diving Spiritual Life

(146)

'Go on thinking' is a deadly disease,
Wearisome, with no remedy to ease;
Severed, of course, one is from world of charm,
For which thought much the same did for him harm.

(147)

Run you away where from all pain?
And what see there else more to gain?
Turn your back, sure, the same to find,
No prize, with you, will be more kind?

(148)

No state in psyche, nay, no where ever stays,
O, kind are for us the august law's ways;
If so, the same is true for painful state,
Why, then, to endure, in all, hesitate?

(149)

With firmness all weakness has to be set aside,
By reason, pure, in all with no extremes outside;
What ill you wish to cure, with remedies grows more,
Unseen got up a force now preys upon you sore.

(150)

Where from all pains in chain begin,
If known is that, well, face to face;
And checked, in full, its origin,
Sure, with fast pace, you move to grace.

(151)

Give gap to recover,
From vice of things in use;
Got up undue fervour;
At end tends to confuse.

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DAY 22

Learned saints and sages had proclaimed *aham brahm asmi* or *tattvamasi* which respectively means "I am *Brahman*" and "Thou art or you are the divine essence". The word *Brahman* literally means "The Lord and Ruler of the *Brahmand* (Cosmos)". Thus, the natural deduction and conclusion is that whatever is eternal and ever existing can never have an end or death. In their words, just as the Cosmos *(Brahmand)* has been eternally existing and everpresent, since time immemorial, similarly Brahman (the Lord and Ruler of *Brahmand*) is eternal and everliving, since the origin of time and space. Thus, the moment one accepts and admits that one's *atma* (the divine power of consciousness dwelling in one's perishable physical body) is eternal and everlasting, as well as that it is essentially part and parcel of the eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient *Paramatma* (the supreme divine power of consciousness), one will automatically achieve *moksha* (spiritual salvation). In other words, the moment one's *atma* merges with *Paramatma*, or one's *atma* gets transformed into *Paramatma*, he will automatically achieve moksha.That is why learned Hindu Saints and Sages proclaimed long time ago: *aham brahman asmi* and *tattvamasi*. This is called God realization. They also proclaimed that when a person develops the habit to feel friendly and frank with his fellow beings, then the entire world becomes his own family *(Vasudevam kutumbkam)*.

The big illusion *(maya)* of the external, material world acts as a thick camouflage and conceals the universal, eternal and all-pervasive *Brahman* under its impenetrable wraps. This illusion reduces the human being into an infinitesimal, impotent, ignorant non entity and forces the person to commit actions which will not allow him to accept that his *atma* is essentially part and parcel of *Paramatma*. One has to tear the wrap of this illusion for knowing this interrelationship.

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DAY 23

Brahman can be realized and experienced both as *saguna* and *saakar brahman* (manifesting in tangible form) as well as *nirguna* and *nirakar brahman*. But the concept of *saguna* and *saakar brahman* is very helpful and useful to consolidate and concentrate the ever fluctuating and ever flickering mind.

According to the Law of Transmigration of Soul propounded in the Hindu spiritual philosophy, *atma* is eternal and everlasting. Hence the concept of death and dying means just a, 'transit station', from where *atma* leaves one physical body for taking another physical body. However, the dying person has absolutely no say in the selection of his next physical body, which is decided and which is determined according to the good and bad deeds chosen and performed by him in his present life and in his previous life/lives which have been preserved in the form of *sanskaras* (indelible impressions).

When a person controls and subjugates his vices and weaknesses, and thereafter when he also controls and subjugates his irresistible urge to sleep, and when he wilfully keeps awake, he will experience a unique mental satisfaction and inner comfort, which the saints and sages have named, "inner spiritual bliss", a great rejuvenating peaceful experience ordained by his *atma*, which is always dwelling in his physical body. Furthermore, *atma* (the limited and circumscribed divine power of consciousness, dwelling within the physical body) is an inalienable part and parcel of *Paramatma (who is also called Sachidanand)*, i.e. *Sat* (eternal) + *Chit* (divine power of conciousness) + *Anand* (Bliss). Unless the person becomes fully aware of his *atma*, and unless he gets fully convinced of the eternal relationship between his *atma* and *Paramatma*, he cannot be called a "spiritually awakened" or "spiritually enlightened person", This is the essence of *Jnanayoga*.

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DAY 24

A person should always bear in his mind that the same divine power of consciousness dwelling in him and controlling his bodily processes perfectly to keep it alive, is also active in all other living beings and manages their lives. This power which sages and saints call *Brahman* is eternal, all pervasive and everpresent and which dwells in the physical body which is temporary, transitory, tangible and ever-changing matter. Death annihilates, destroys and devastates only the physical body. When all the human beings of the entire universe are part and parcel of *Bhagwan*, then one should also feel equally happy and comfortable when his fellow brothers are happy and comfortable. Similarly, one should acknowledge their pain and agony and treat them with sympathy. Also one should always appreciate, admire and applaud even their minor merits ignoring their colossal demerits and defects. One should always remember that his adversary too is part and parcel of *Bhagwan*, and hence one should not react and retaliate negatively. But one cannot develop such a positive, commendable and noble attitude, unless one starts worshipping *Bhagwan* with utmost devotion and dedication.

Bhagawan Krishna declares in the Gita : "Unless the person commits himself to My worship with utmost devotion and dedication, constantly and consistently, he cannot know My true and actual nature and recognise all My mysterious and divine powers and supernatural capabilities." One should, therefore, always pray to *Bhagwan* in an earnest manner to guide him at every step of one's life. Under all circumstances and situations, one should worship, may be silently, but most sincerely and prostrate at His lotus feet, seeking His blessings. *Bhagwan* Krishna calls such worship as *parabhakti* . But only that person is blessed with *parabhakti* who devotedly and dedicatedly adopts the various methods of worship mentioned earlier.

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DAY 25

First of all, one should possess *vishuddha buddhi*, the highly developed intellectual power of discrimination, to acquire spiritual knowledge, to comprehend that all the material comforts of the external worlds are false, impure , superficial, transitory and always end in pain and suffering . This power helps the person to get rid of his false sense of self pride, deceptive arrogance, spurious social status and pseudo ego, and hence every person must strive to develop '*vishuddha buddhi*' and spiritual knowledge to the maximum possible extent. For this, one has to sincerely adopt and devotedly pursue the noble path of religion, and thereby restrict and restrain one's impulsive mind, which hankers after worldly comforts and which indulges in various types of vices. With consistent efforts in course of time one will develop '*vishuddha buddhi*' which will make him conscious of many other inner spiritual worlds. In this way, one should avoid to gratifying one's various types of sensuous temptations the excessive, insatiable desires, self created habitual needs, and even the weakness to indulge in futile gossips to while away precious time.

The person whose sole and ultimate aim is self–realization (or realization of *Brahman*) should confidently pursue any or all types of approaches, like absorbed meditation *(dhyana)*, or collective devotional singing *(kirtan)*, or constant recitation of some sacred aphorism (*mantra/shloka*) or any divine name of *Bhagwan (namajapa)* in his mission. Such a person will thus be honestly engaged in religious worship called '*parabhakti*' i.e. worship of *Bhagwan* with the help of *bhakti-yoga* with complete surrender and will achieve in due course his cherished goal of self realization because he has developed the firm conviction that one and the same divine power of consciousness is eternally present in the entire cosmos and that it preserves and protects all living beings in different forms.

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DAY 26

Eight organs to set apart

1. Wrong view *(mithya-drishti)*: It means a view that harms a person, a view that is not good. Such a wrong view deceives a person in many ways. It reveals a non-existent thing as existent and by giving it a concrete form, arouses a desire in the human mind and keeps him entangled in many actions. He creates a view of friend, brother, mother, father, sister etc. of persons who provide him some pleasure, respect and honour. Because of their transient behaviour he creates only in his view a person (*sattva*) dwelling in the body. The world is created only out of such viewing. Similarly, those who cause even a slight pain are treated by a living being as enemies and he views them in himself accordingly. All this is the creation of wrong viewing. As a matter of fact, there is no friend or foe, one's own or the other one. This is a positive and right view because it has no attachment or aversion and does not lead to wrong actions.

That all this world is suffering is the drama of wrong viewing. The inner God of nature, call it *Prajapati* or *Brahma*, produces this wrong view of some worldy object or person and makes it/him look bright, shining and pleasant. He is called *Prajapati* (life-god) because he pushes the person into the outer world and gives him some identity accordingly, as no one can live without identity. But one, who assumes some form in the world must perish and cannot be everlasting. Thus, the cycle of birth and death will never end. But there will be no question of death for a person who has experienced the cosmological consciousness manifested as true and eternal Bliss in himself and who will be steadfast in that bliss.

2. Wrong aspirations *(mithya sankalpa)*: Wrong aspirations will develop about the objects of which a wrong view is formed. Such wrong aspirations do not lead a person to a noble state or salvation. One must turn away from them all and keep one's right thoughts awake.

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DAY 27 Eight organs to set apart Contd ...

3. Wrong emotion/Wrong mental energy *(mithya- kriti)*: Wrong Emotion means an emotion that impels a person towards wrong actions and wrong conduct against his well-being and causes pain. Once a wrong view is formed, wrong aspirations are also formed, but if they are not removed from the mind, they impel one towards wrong actions and develop other wrong tendencies and wrong conduct like anger, aversion, wrong speech, sloth etc. All this is wrong emotion or wrong mental energy. One must evoke the right emotions to escape from the wrong emotions. For that, one must develop and establish dispassion in the mind, keep the mind steadfast in contentment, instead of in greed, in forgiveness instead of anger. He must establish noble emotions of friendship etc. in case of aversion and spirit of dispassion against attachment, insatiable passion etc. to maintain steadfastness in the face of pain and impatience. Patience alone provides steadfastness in meditation. Keeping constantly awake is the right emotion and right exercise to overcome sleep etc. It purifies the path to well-being.

4. Wrong conduct of speech *(mithya-vachana)*: A person can realize himself what type of conduct of speech he must observe towards others when wrong tendencies of desires, anger etc. manifested as wrong view, wrong aspiration, and wrong emotion exercise his mind. One must realize the truth of conduct in one's memory with the alertness of mind and mindfulness and practise positive and right speech. One must learn to improve himself by recognizing and understanding the wrong conduct of speech and gain power of energy to renounce them. One must utter his words with full understanding as observed by ancient sages in the aphorism *(Mantraputam vadet vakyam)*. Thus one must make efforts to use right speech.

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DAY 28

Eight organs to set apart (continued)

(5) Something ending in wrong act/Act ending in the wrong *(mithya–karmanta):* One must not indulge in all those actions which ultimately prove wrong. When the practice of doing unprincipled actions owing to temptation of pleasure or fear of external pain becomes strong and ultimately, the end will be wrong. If one while observing principles, right faith and restraint, indulges in actions which are essential to maintain the body and for minimum essential conduct with others, in such a way that one's pain and entanglement do not increase, all these acts will end rightly. One must not thus provide any opportunity for actions impelled by passion, desire, attachment and aversion etc. They do not end in good in this world as well as in the other world.

(6) Wrong living or wrong livelihood *(mithya or asamyk-ajivika):* This is strikingly opposite to the right manner of living, which a seeker should avoid. If someone acts with restraint and if someone develops in himself confidence in right faith, energy, mindfulness, absorbed meditation and truth-bearing knowledge, it will be a path of the right use of time. When a person living a life of principles, conducting his speech mindfully, running his life while observing restraint, avoids all wrong actions, always makes efforts to do all good, thinks of maintaining purity of mind, and on getting an opportunity meditates on all his actions, and his conduct towards others and when he realizes his weaknesses, drawbacks and omissions and aspiring for improvement, maintaining patience even in pain rows the boat of his life by being thoughtful equipped with right knowledge, mindfulness and spiritual truth, he observes right living and remains away from sloth.

(7) Wrong meditation or Wrong planning *(mithya dhyana)*: A person seeks to keep himself safe while he seeks to harm another. All such planning is wrong planning and a misuse of his mental power and of time.

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DAY 28 Eight organs to set apart Contd..

A person must focus on right meditation, through contemplation on the right and wrong consequences of his actions, to turn away from wrong actions and to indulge in right actions. To attain permanent peace in the soul, he must try to find out how worldly pleasures ultimately cause pain and sorrow and how he can turn away from the passion that increase this pain. Meditation by concentrating the mind to know all this is called right meditation. One must analyse oneself by sitting in solitude, looking in oneself and observing the approaching worldly problems and their consequences and experiencing their pain, one must visualize a person who does not have these wrong tendencies. Believing his name to be *Om, Rama, Shiva* or some other name, awakening his mind with this holy name, protecting his mind from sleep and the pursuits of the world, watching his fettered state, a person must meditate on that supreme person or God, who is without these fetters and who is always in a blissful state. Realizing that all identities in the world are created by wrong viewing. Realizing this one must strive to be free from all types of external identity and attain salvation revealed as permanent peace.

(8) Wrong memories (mithya-smriti) : Whatever event a person experiences, its impression is established in his mind, and because of that impression, the memory of that person or object involved in the event, clings to him for a long time. Memory that obstructs the path of well being is said to be wrong memory and the memory that favours the path of well being is said to be right memory.

Thus so far, from wrong viewing to wrong memories, eight wrong aspects have been highlighted, and as against them eight organs to be accumulated have been explained. With the help of ten great powers of salvation which he should constantly enhance with his free soul, he would attain supreme state of salvation revealed as eternal peace and happiness.

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DAY 28 (4th Long Weekend) Contd..

Verses of the Diving Spiritual Life

(152)

As one, into the world, at first, as a babe came,
Things, then, entered in him through the senses in part;
Through years gathered full in memory flashed inflame,
Which were null and void when was learning at start.

(153)

Presented in aspects things came into contact;
Instantly consciousness seems this and that in fact;
Do-well existence but becomes in-between,
Only for birth and death, for sorrows, for unclean.

(154)

Turned up never that our consciousness is unknown,
Here, nevertheless, mind to this and that is flown;
Seeking for excellence, once obtained, not content,
With whatever contained, in for ills to repent.

(155)

An evil being reduced to a subtler state may run,
Don't be then slow to assail as true prize may be won;
With virtues take your stand, shifting as mind does go,
Vanishing as be observed they be made freely to flow.

(156)

True! you are allured by something that looks pleasant,
Suffering it steady change does not remain constant;
Turning contrariwise that at length tends to die,
What's good that moment which stands its grace to belie.

(157)

All synthetic units of being are passed away,
With selfsame those of 'self' leaving no trace of them;
Realising truth as this as insight holds its sway,
Casts off all impure things goes out of all problem.

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DAY 29

Systematic use of the five powers of salvation

When a person seeks to make a well-organized and systematic use of life, he will have to think, contemplate and determine everything keeping in mind the goal of his life, and he will have to do whatever is required for the achievement of that goal and conduct himself accordingly. He will also have to renounce minor pleasures of the body, sense organs and the mind to realise that magnificient goal and he will have to mindfully endure the pain of renouncing that pleasure. He will also have to endure pain of regulating his seat, meditation, sleep, food etc. mindfully keeping in mind his ultimate aim of his existence. Also, the person must awaken himself to a point where he, with the help of the five powers of salvation—confidence in right faith, energy, mindfulness, absorbed meditation, truth bearing knowledge—subdues the wrong ways of natural life, the wrong actions of body, mind, sense organs and intellect and where he adopts a spiritual life (life in the soul, for the soul, in the interest of the soul) and where he attains peace of the soul as a result of nourishing his spiritual life. The peace of the soul without any specific purpose, is the one that is not developed for any external, worldly purpose. It is attained only after attaining freedom from the external natural fetters of attachment etc. in life to which a person has been accustomed since childhood. A person attains salvation manifested as eternal bliss by understanding these worldly fetters through the five powers of salvation and by weakening and destroying these fetters through right efforts. Therefore these five powers are the keys to attain salvation. The soul will not be at peace as long as there is the persistence of the pain, which is dependent directly on the flow of sense organs and the mind towards the external world. Complete freedom from this pain and ultimate peace will be attained only when a person turns away from all kinds of impulses of natural life through these five powers of salvation.

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DAY 30

Seven factors of enlightenment *(bodha ke saat anga)*

One should always be aware of the following factors of enlightenment to tread on the path successfully and confidently:

(i) Mindfulness and alertness of mind must be maintained so that one can be aware of one's state of mind and so that one can remember one's duty.

(ii) The power or energy must be developed so that the undesirable state of mind can be averted and so that the mind can be absorbed while sitting in meditation.

(iii) The spiritual striver must be able to enter into meditation, bring the mind to a state of concentration by awakening right thought with the words.

(iv) Examination of truth must be fully undertaken. At first he must keep that aspect of truth in mind which appears noble. Then he must analyse through a proper method how far it is noble, whether this permanent nobility leads to pain or destruction. After all this analysis, one must determine what ultimately has been proved. All this constitutes analysis *(mimansa)*. When truth is revealed through it, all confusion of mind will be resolved and

(v) Happiness will spread in the mind. The pain that earlier seemed to overtake him will be destroyed and he will look cheerful. The face turns weak and pale in a state of pain.

(vi) Then liking *(preeti)* for this path will prevail in the self through meditation. When the aspirant learns that there is no alternative to the path he has chosen for escaping pain, his love or liking for this path will never leave him. If this noble path is renounced, he will have the path of wrong association that leads to wrong actions – the path undertaken by others and dependent on others. Therefore, his love for the path must always be maintained.

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DAY 30 Contd ...

(vii) Again, showing indifference to the wrong path will not let the striver's mind fall in to the trap of needless thoughts and worries. This indeed is the right knowledge with its seven factors. If the striver is devoted to this right path, he will be safe and successful in his routine spiritual life and will ultimately attain peace of supreme salvation. If the spiritual striver is absorbed in meditation and makes constant right efforts, one day he will certainly attain freedom from the world of passion, involving worldly interests. One is united with others to maintain the body, to fulfil his desires and to enjoy the pleasures of one's desires. Such a worldly person is confined to a limited circle, the world of passions. He cannot look at the higher godly world where cosmological consciousness can be experienced.

If some aspirant restricts his desires and practises steadfastness in his seat of meditation, he will gradually free himself of these desires, overcome the force of sloth and sleep and go beyond the world of passions. If some energetic striver keeps himself awake in this entanglement and escapes this enticement, he will experience an entry into cosmological consciousness. While staying in the vast circle, generally the mind will not be tempted to listen to the world of passions. When one acquires freedom from all kinds of identity by observing equanimity in pleasure and pain, it is salvation from all kinds of identity, then during meditation pure knowledge is revealed in all its full significance. To attain this supreme state, it is most important to firmly and steadfastly pursue the path of right religious faith, with *sheel* (noble and right conduct in all events), *dana* (spirit of renunciation/self sacrifice/charity) without *pramada* (non-vigilance or dis-inclination to move on the noble path).

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DAY 31

Explanation of world beyond this life *(Lok charcha)*

About the worlds beyond this life, it may be understood that the circle of passions is extended as far as the mind is fettered in mutual desires, passions etc. This indeed is the world of passions or the world of being or becoming *(kamaloka or bhuloka)*.

On realizing the triviality of the objects of this world, the mind develops dispassion and the seeker leads a pure life and restricts his desires only to the maintenance of his body. He thus renounces the world of passions and, with his efforts, moves in the sphere of sense organs. Here the sense organs accept their respective objects but no work related to the body is left to be done. It requires only to move about in this sphere with a pure attitude realizing the world through sense organs and remaining pure even while enduring the pain of renouncing the objects. Such persons alone reach the sphere of heaven with the help of their austerity and purity. Even while on the earth, they move about as if in heaven. They indulge in actions only to maintain the body and attain greater happiness after death as they attain freedom from the pain of the body and the actions to maintain it.

If one with such purity and austerity, realizes the presence of same knowledge – God *(Jnanadeva)* pervading in the bodies of others and realizes God's presence alike in all and if one has an attitude of service and friendliness towards them, always experiencing nearness to Krishna etc., remaining away from the entanglement, attatchment and aversion of the objects and person's, one in accordance with one's attitude is born in *goloka* in the sphere of sense organs. *'Go'* means senses, organs and *'Loka'* means a sphere or circle, i.e. one moves about in the sphere of sense-organs in association with *Vasudev* (God) who dwells in all. But there are those who have right knowledge, and who treat all alike, who are happy in the happiness of others, who are compassionate when others, in pain, dwell in *Brahmaloka* (sphere of the formless) and they experience the eternal happiness of the comos through their meditation.

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DAY 31 Contd..

The persons who have greater dispassion, noble emotions and love of meditation, who do not move about in the sphere of sense organs and who have love of God, realize God as pure knowledge during their meditation. Renouncing the actions for their body, escaping the trap of their ego, they experience the same all-pervading God revealed as pure knowledge or consciousness staging His dramas in all the persons in the world. Persons who have right knowledge and who realize all this live in the sphere of *Vishnu*. Those who see the drama of God in all living beings dwell in the sphere of *Vishnu*. But this spirit manifested in all living beings is limited to a few moments. After this that spirit remains unrevealed, unmanifested and at peace. In this way those who see the unmanifested peace in all, dwell in the sphere of *Shiva*, the lord of *tamoguna*. Such devotees keep their mind absorbed through mindfulness and meditation in that unmanifested consciousness revealed as pure knowledge and attain the peace of *Shivaloka*. (All these spheres mentioned after the sphere of sense-organs *(goloka) are* formless spheres. *Remaining* free from all these spheres, the salvation seeking strivers proceed further and renounce all identity. In salvation, realization of consciousness does not mean a belief in any identity. It may remain as it is. The striver must not let even the ego that understands and realizes identity develop. He is only to eliminate all fetters by pursuing the path of purification. Afterwards, he has to calm down the fire of the pain of passion, attachment, aversion ego etc., with patience watching it like a spectator. He will thus attain eternal happiness in calming down of pains with endurance. With change taking place every moment, the pain will be averted and pure knowledge will be revealed as peace and happiness will be experienced in that state of emptiness. This indeed is the eternal peace of salvation, the supreme salvation, meaning that there is no cause for being born in the outer world, as he has entered in the blissful sphere–*Vaikunta dham*, where peace persists eternally.

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Mindful Respiration
or
Pranapan Samriti

Pranapan Smriti means mindful respiration i.e. performing the process of inhaling and exhaling with mindfulness. In the holy scriptures, it is called as 'pranapan'. In the body of a common human being, the process of breathing goes on without knowledge or even unknowingly as it flows during sleep. The mind of such a person, trapped in worldly entanglements is always lost in his own affairs and he remains busy with other activities. He is not even aware of his breathing process. Of course, during brisk walking, or in a state of illness, when breathing becomes difficult and fast only then one may be aware of it. Otherwise, the self-consciousness conducts the process of respiration in all the living beings in the same manner in order to perform routine activities of the body. This is sufficient only to keep the wheels of life moving. But a spiritual striver, wishing to attain salvation (deliverance), should conduct the process of breathing with mindfulness during his free time after taking meals. With this, normal inhaling and exhaling will also result in blessedness. The body feels blessed only when inhaling and exhaling becomes normal. A man inhaling deeply but remaining entangled in mental tension, doubt and desire etc., bound by his self interest and lost in his thoughts, does not find the time to exhale. The entangled and heldup breath gives pain and harms the body by making it sick. Similarly, for a person lost in thoughts etc. for a long time, if inhaling is short in a state of tension, selfishness, doubt and fear, but if exhaling is long, it will cause pain to his organs and his physical health will deteriorate. In the absence of normal breath, the parts and inner organs of the body do not get enough energy to conduct their functions completely. Blood does not circulate in a proper way in the organs. The body is deprived of the nutrients from the food consumed because the only power for doing all this work i.e. carrying out the assimilation

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of food etc., is in inhaling and exhaling. But this is not conducted properly because one does not know, in what type of fetters the mind is caught or how it is entangled in the vicious cycle of numerous pleasures and pains. Again the mind is badly entangled in doubts and thoughts whether to do it or not and one does not even find time to conduct the mindful respiration properly. Similarly, it is not known in which bonds of affection, malice, ego, delusion, fetters etc., the mind is entangled and so it is lost in thoughts of nowhere. It is self-consciousness hidden inside alone that conducts the respiration only to maintain life. But even this process of entangled breath is a sinful act which brings punishment in the form of disease and sorrow etc. A spiritual striver should personally test this reality as to how the respiration is halting, suppressed and difficult in a state of tension, doubt, fear etc. He himself will come to know of it and realise it. Whenever he is bound by tension etc. or by false desires, he should conduct a surprise test to find out how the respiration is being conducted, and then he will realise that it is not being conducted in a healthy and useful manner. It is sometimes short like an ant and sometimes extremely long like the period of sorrow and thus it flows while harming the organs. It prevents the proper digestion of food and smooth circulation of blood. So we have to remove this defect through mindful respiration so that all the inner organs of the body can acquire energy from it to conduct their respective functions properly. But this will be possible only when the mind, too, is healthy. A healthy mind means a mind free from fetters. Such a healthy mind alone can conduct mindful respiration. The mind will be free from fetters only when it is free from the concept of joys and sorrows and from doubt, lust, anger etc., and also when it is free from the thoughts of pleasures and pains of the past, present or future. So much so that one should continue with mindful respiration uninterruptedly despite joys and sorrows or other fetters. This will enable all the parts of the body to acquire energy from respiration

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to make the body healthy and to bring mental happiness. The method of conducting systematic mindful respiration is as follows :-

First of all one should sit in a state of *Padmasan* (Lotus Seat) while keeping his head, neck and spinal cord erect and start inhaling and exhaling mindfully remaining steadfast. If, initially, it is painful to sit in *Padmasan*, (Lotus Seat), then one may sit in any other convenient posture while keeping all the parts of the body erect as mentioned above. If one feels pain in knee joints, one may sit on a chair with legs dangling below, but his spinal cord should be kept erect as advised above. However, one should keep on trying to sit in *Padmasan* (Lotus Seat). While doing so, one should keep a table in the front for support to avoid falling under the influence of sleep. It is not advisable for a healthy man to sit at a higher place while breathing mindfully as there is the risk of fall under the influence of sleep.

In this way, while on *aasan* (seat) one should be fully aware when one is inhaling. The spiritual striver should be fully aware of the time consumed in inhaling and similarly in exhaling. Awareness should be constant for the whole duration of inhaling and exhaling. One should not be without this awareness even for a single moment. When one is not aware of one's breath, it means the mind has slipped and has gone away to entanglements elsewhere. Instantly, one should alert the mind, remember and revert back to mindful respiration. One should be fully aware of inhaling and exhaling. One should mindfully draw the breath in and then release it. Mindfulness should not be allowed to lapse even for a moment. This, by power or energy, is the only infallible method to control the mind. Thus, one should not wilfully try to prolong the breath nor one should shorten it nor one should stop it. One should not try to interrupt and should let the breath flow in and out, howsoever long or short in itself it may be. But inhaling and exhaling should be conducted mindfully. One should not be

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unaware i.e. one should be fully aware while inhaling and exhaling. He should not be distracted by the comfort of sloth and sleep. Mindful respiration should be uninterrupted.

Now slowly and slowly, while mindfully inhaling and exhaling, the mind's attention should be shifted to the body. One should inhale and exhale while observing all the inner organs of the body one by one. Similarly, one should feel the stomach full of food while inhaling and then exhale while feeling the full stomach. Similarly, while feeling about the stomach, keep the mind fully awake, and after watching it for a short time one should conduct mindful respiration. Similarly, one should shift one by one to other inner organs like liver, gall bladder, large intestine, small intestine, kidneys, bladder, lungs, heart and brain etc. and mindfully inhale and exhale while feeling them. The mind should be engrossed in this process so completely as to fully forget about the world and all worldly affairs. Then one will be busy in providing full energy to the body. One should keep on inhaling and exhaling while being aware of all the other parts of the body. One should inhale and exhale twice or thrice keeping awareness of each part of the body by turn. In this way, one should continue to do so for half the time one intends to sit and carry on mindful respiration by being aware of the organs in the body. It means that one should give half the time that one wishes to devote for this mindful respiration, and inhale and exhale while being aware of all the organs of the body.

Here it is very important to remember that while feeling about the organs of the body, the breathing process should not be delayed i.e. one should not be so engrossed in feeling the organs as to delay the breathing process.

Now, if half the time to be devoted is over, one should start forgetting the body i.e. one should inhale and exhale without feeling the body and he should let the body and its inner organs go out of one's mind. In this way while one has spent some time in

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inhaling and exhaling, the mind will start activating. Sometimes with the remembrance of one's child, its view will be produced and sometimes of others. The mind may thus get entangled. In this state, the respiration will either be halting or conducted unknowingly. On such an occasion, one should realise the fact that one has sat for the process of mindful respiration and not for thinking about anything else. It is not the time to think about worldly worries. One should start the mindful respiration instantly and forget children etc. If the understanding is awakened through mindful respiration, children etc. will automatically be forgotten. If the mind remains entangled in the children etc., the respiration will be conducted unawares and unknowingly as the mind can do only one thing at a time. One should mindfully observe one's respiration and renounce everything else on this occasion. Mind will never remain idle and if the mind is engrossed in mindful respiration, it will not let any other thing crop in. Just as one has ignored the view of the child through mindful respiration, so as one must practise the avoidance of the evil of doubt, lust, anger, wrath, sloth etc. that dominate the mind and distort the breathing process. Thus, one will be accustomed to pure breathing. After this, if one is reminded of worldly pleasures, one may get entangled in *raga chitta* (mind with attachment). Recollecting the worldly pleasures, one will then forget the breathing process. Instantly, one must become alert and should be so engrossed in mindful respiration that worldly pleasures should disappear from the mind. Similarly, a pain-giving thing may also entangle the mind and in such a state, again, the above mentioned method should be adopted i.e. one should be engrossed in mindful respiration and bid farewell even to *dwesha chitta* (mind with aversion). Similarly, one may be lost in attachment, or in sorrow etc. In such a state of mind with delusion, one must not give up inhaling and should come out of the mud of attachment through mindful respiration. Thus, anything that entangles the mind will distort the respiration. If one does not let it be distorted, all false

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attachments and fetters will then automatically be avoided. This is what is called mindful inhaling and mindful exhaling. If one keeps on concentrating on mindful respiration in this manner, all the evils or fetters like attachment, aversion, delusion etc. will have no opportunity for their manifestation in the mind.

Similarly, if the mind is entangled in worldly pleasures, it will lose awareness of respiration and will not come to know about inhaling and exhaling. If the respiration is mindful, one will forget the worldly pleasures and the respiration will be pleasant. The same is the case with pain. If one becomes worried owing to sorrow, one loses awareness of respiration and if the respiration is mindful, one will forget the sorrow too. In this way, one must, howsoever, try to devote as much time as one can to this process of mindful respiration i.e. from one to three hours and then keep on increasing it as per one's strength. Then it will bring greater benefit rather than harm. Afterwards, whatever time remains after necessary physical activities, it should be devoted to the mindful respiration. If the mind is idle, it will indulge in wasteful activities. But if the food has been digested and one feels light in the body, it is better to sit in meditation. It is most important to free the mind from all the fetters mindfully with knowledge. If one can be free from these fetters through knowledge, one can carry on mindful respiration on other occasions, too. When one entangles his mind in self-interest, these fetters will grow strong and if one realises the pettiness of this self-interest, fetters will disappear and salvation will become natural. One must forcefully get freedom from these fetters through mindful respiration. However, if one knowingly turns away from these fetters, it does not matter even if the respiration is carried on unknowingly or unawares. But one must not sit for meditation before five or six hours after meals till the food is fully digested otherwise it is not beneficial. However, one may sit for mindful respiration either immediately after taking meals or after taking rest after meals depending upon one's convenience.

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This is the detailed description of mindful respiration. The spiritual striver can, thus, practise it mindfully without any doubt or fear after understanding its technique of conducting it in detail. Even if the doubt persists, one must not worry. One should start with whatever one has understood after the study of this chapter or one should clear one's doubts by talking to or discussing with someone who is experienced. By doing this exercise at the proper time, one will understand its technique without any doubt. In solitude, this exercise is a blessing in itself. But one should keep on reading this chapter carefully again and again. Then one will understand everything about what one has to do for this mindful respiration.

|| HARI OM TAT SAT ||

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Updated detail of Collection from blessed devotees for publication of Revised Second Edition of Daily Meditaiton on the Divine Spiritual Life and Ohm & Soham Book.

S. No.	Name of Donor	Date	R.No.	Amount Rs. P.
1.	Smt. Vimla Bhanot, New Delhi	19.03.19	710	5,100.00
2.	Smt. Nirmal Sharma Ji, Panckhula	19.03.19	711	2,100.00
3.	Sh. Harsh Kumar c/o Sh. Anand Sharma Ji, Chandigarh	19.03.19	712	5,100.00
4.	Mr. Bala Ji c/o Sh. Anand Sharma Ji, Chandigarh	19.03.19	713	5,100.00
5.	Dr. Neelam Marwahaji, Chandigarh	19.03.19	714	11,000.00
6.	Sh. Anand Sharma Ji Chandigarh	19.03.19	715	11,000.00
7.	Cancelled		716	
8.	Sh. Jagan Nath Garg & Family, Ontario (Canada)	8.0618	717	15,000.00
9.	Late Sh. Jai Parkash Mathurji, Majri through his son Amit Mathur	18.03.21	718	5,100.00
10.	Sh. Kishor Kumar Ratraji C-6, Flat No. 70, DDA Colony East of Kailash, Delhi-110065	5.04.21	719	51,000.00
		Total		1,10,500.00
11.	Previous Balance on 18.02.2019			95858.00
12.	Interest for PNB upto 05.06.2021			11508.00
		Grand Total		217866.00

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EXPENDITURE DETAIL

1.	Expenditure for Dispatching through Regd. Pkt from the spiritual books to spiritual readers from 1.03.2019 to 30.06.2021	4334.00
2.	Complete udation of website of Rev. Swamiji Maharaj	13000.00
3.	Total Expenditure on Publishing Complete Book of Ohm & Soham	6500.00
4.	Typing of Revised Edition manuscript of Daily Meditation Book and its setting	3500.00
5.	Ballarpur paper 70 GSM	26343.00
6.	Printing of 550 Books	22902.00
7.	Binding of 550 Books	12755.00
	Total	89334.00
	Amount Left	**217866.00**
		- 89334.00
	Balance	**128532.00**

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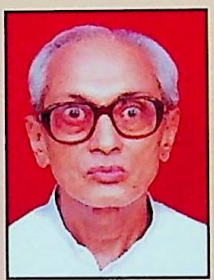
Dr. Uma Sangameswaran



M.A. M.Phil., Ph.D. retired as Head of the Department of English, Mercy College, Palakkad, affiliated to the University of Calicut in Kerala. She is the recipient of the Best Teacher Award in the State. She is deeply involved in spiritual activities. She holds Satsang classes, and gives public discourses on *Ramayan, Bhagavata, Devi Mahatmya* etc. She has published 20 booklets of compilations of slokas and songs. She is now translating spiritual books from Malayalam and Hindi into English. Dr. Uma was one of the three translators of Swami Dayanand Giri's *Spiritual Discourses* Vol. II A. She also edited the entire book published in 2009.



Shri Vitthalbhai I. Patel



Hindi Sevak, Sr. H.S.S., T.D. a humble, honest and sincere High School Teacher of Hindi and English - a lover of discipline, truth and simple living-of generous, serviceable, and benevolent nature, popularly known as 'Bapu Saheb' among the students-fond of reading good and spiritual literature, cultural activities-at 70 still active doing small activities for students' as well as people's welfare- an ex-trustee of the Gandhi Shanti Kendra, Nar (Distt. Anand). Retired in May 2000 from the D.D. Patel Sharada English School, Padra, Distt. Vadodara (Gujarat).

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Namo Narayan !

The inner spiritual knowledge of life in general is gained only in meditation which is inspired, developed or brought about even by rightly charging one's mind with these following four powers :

1. Loving kindness for the happiness of others: To be in pleasure or joy, in seeing or observing others in joy or pleasures; and, not to be jealous of, or remaining indifferent, while observing their pleasures or joy.

2. Compassion or Sympathy: Seeing others in misery or trouble, to have a compassionate heart for their pain, even though one may not be the least in power, practically to do anything for them; even then, he should not become mentally heartless, to express even in his heart, sympathy for others in troubles and pains.

3. Praise or Praiseworthy attitude towards other's good qualities and fine acts: i.e. not to turn a blind eye to the good act and show the bad ones in respect of others.

4. Affecting ignorance towards others' sins, wrong, and all bad and mischievous things, which are not practically part of our business.

By developing these four powers, one is fully fit for applying his mind to a right analysis of life, and all events which occur; and then he can conclude right knowledge out of them for the inspiration of one's heart; to take the right course of life for one's ultimate well-being.

-Excerpts from Verses of The Divine Spiritual Life
(With Explanation)

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